choice

THE CHOICE WE MADE:

PRACTICE OF WORK WITH THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE IN THE EASTERN NEIGHBORHOOD COUNTRIES

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Opportunity for Civic Engagement, implemented
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CONTENTS

ABOUT THE CHOICE PROJECT 4

HERITAGE. The contents of this notion and the meaning of our work with it 10

PROJECT STORIES 42

ARMENIA 42

- Traditional cuisine as cultural heritage 44
- Incorporation of “Kumayri” historic-architectural compound of the Gyumri city cultural heritage in modern public life of Armenia 48
- Cultural heritage conservation as a sustainable development factor among the communities located close to the Shirak Province monuments 52
- More recognizable Lori 56
- Engage Vanadzor. Heritage of modernity and cradle of creative industry 60

ARMENIA-MOLDOVA 64

- Crossroads of cultures through the lenses of young photographers 66

BELARUS 70

- Art of a sincere heart 72
- Brest stories guide 76
- Historical and cultural heritage UNOVIS — the cultural code of Vitsiebsk city development 80
- Mirages and miracles of Ashmiany town 84
- Color of Belarus: Actualization of the Belarusian tradition as an identity marker 88
- The Node of life 92
- Singing Assembly 96
- Belarusian art of the XX century for children and their parents 100
- Shkolishcha (Pakrouski Pasad) as part of the historical-cultural value “Historical center of Mahilou” 104
- Belarusian poster 108

MOLDOVA 112

- Trajan Walls — cultural resource for the sustainable cross-border development and collaboration 114
- Museum — space for the community and intercultural dialogue 118
- History revival — Integration of Duruitoarea Cave in European tourist space 122
- Historical site Camp of King Charles XII of Sweden at Varnita — valorization and promotion (SITVAR) 126
- Clay of time: A journey of ceramics through ages 130
- From Remembering to Reconciliation — creating meeting point for dialogues between Generations 134

UKRAINE 138

- Galician California 140
- Brody town’s community and polycultural heritage: Potential, interaction and prospects 144
- Dnipro cultural landscapes 148
- Revival of a legend: way to development and consolidation 152
- The pearls of the past to make the necklaces of the future 156
- Digitized actual cultural heritage 160
- “Fellow-countrymen” literary and local history routes 164
- Rivne region’s wooden church architecture: Past, present and future 168
- We are the city 172
- CHOICE teaches to be famous 176

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT: Reflections of the CHOICE project organizers 180

CULTURAL HERITAGE: Recommendations for the Eastern Partnership region 190

ANNEX International and national legislative documents, regulating policy in cultural heritage sector 200

ABOUT THE CHOICE PROJECT

The CHOICE — Cultural Heritage: Opportunity for Improving Civic Engagement — project has been developed and later implemented in the four Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. A partner consortium was made up of the following entities:

- Association of Local Democracy Agencies, ALDA (France);
- International Non-Government Organisation EuroBelarus (Vilnius, Lithuania);
- Centre for Cultural Management (Lviv, Ukraine);
- National ICOM Committee (Chisinau, Moldova);
- Educational Research Foundation Millennium (Yerevan, Armenia); and
- Public Association Centre for Social Innovations (Minsk, Belarus).

The project obtained funding within the framework of the European Union programme Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility and was implemented in course of two years: between 2015 and 2017.

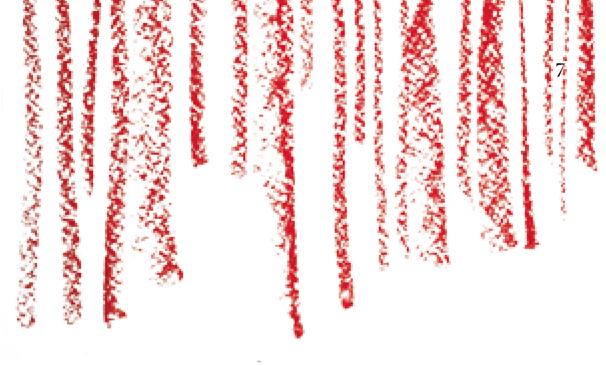
The project was mainly aimed at building the capacities and development of the non-government non-profit organisations and initiatives which are engaged in conservation, re-thinking and promotion of the cultural and historical heritage, in order they would gradually took more and more part in policy dialogue on issues of heritage in their local communities, countries, as well as in the East European region.

Beside the civil society organisations, professional teams and communities, intellectuals and cultural activists from the four nations who focus on cultural landscape and its diversity rehabilitation and preservation, as well as correct and efficient use of the cultural patrimony resources for the development of cities, towns or other human settlements were involved in the project.

However, beyond that, the CHOICE project emphasized the cultural legacy value for strengthening and development of modern identity and the European civilisational choice made by its member countries. Therefore, the project participants addressed the contemporary challenges faced by all of us today, as well as the issues related to cultural heritage conservation and use. These are the challenges which deal with interpretation, re-thinking and introduction of the past cultural achievements in the modern socio-cultural context.

The programme has become for the local organisations and communities interested in the cultural heritage work a much-anticipated opportunity to exchange information on sore subjects with their colleagues in other countries, as well as to release their visions, concerns and suggestions to the public domain. The civil society organisations were also provided with an opportunity to collaborate with cultural heritage experts, so as to continue their engagement in the sphere in a more successful way.

The CHOICE project has helped its participants to meet and know each other and to become aware of the need and opportunities for cooperation and maintenance of close communications inside the entire Eastern Partnership region. Quite often the identical or similar tasks or issues proved to be momentous for the member countries and, among them, preservation of unique craft traditions and creative practices; upgrading the memory culture; attitude to the Soviet legacy, as well as cultural heritage work in the conflict areas; combination of traditions and innovations in our lives; collection, digitalisation and provision of information on cultural patrimony facilities; formation of the local development strategies based on a strong cultural identity; improving quality of life by means of culture; and several others.



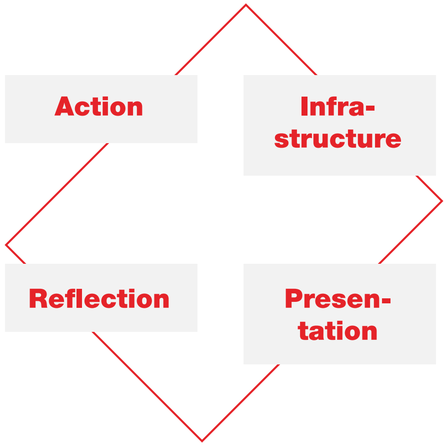


Fig. 1.
The CHOICE project participants activity structure

In order to navigate these rather sophisticated topics, we have proposed to the CHOICE project participants the following activity structure:

Where:
Action means a creative project which targets achievement of a specific practical outcome or product by way of a concise activity set.

Through an open competition, the CHOICE project selected and supported developers and authors of innovative for our region projects aimed at conservation and currently central interpretation of the national cultural heritage.

The four countries' non-government organisations and professional communities have implemented in total 32 projects. Their themes and formats were widely diverse and ranged from archaeological summer camps to multi-media catalogues or vocational schools and dealt with both tangible and intangible heritage, ancient and recent Soviet past, design or theatrical achievements, singing or cooking traditions, artistic school or ethnic community patrimony, oral history, museums and cultural landscapes.

All these projects are presented in this publication.

Infrastructure means here the activity which contributes to a sustainable continuance of the new socio-cultural content created by the project.

A substantial part of the activities was dedicated to capacity building of the initiatives or professional organisations involved in the CHOICE. The project members had an opportunity to get an experience of assessing the institutional capacity and forming a strategy for their further development under adviser supervision. They improved their knowledge and skills in the area of project management, financial management, public relations, advocacy and conflict management.

The project provided for its participants' professional development. For two years some debate or educational workshops, conferences and public discussions were organised in Armenia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine for re-thinking cultural heritage and its role for identity development and preservation, as well as for dissemination of and discussions over the best practices and lessons available in our countries.

Over the long term, we would like to achieve influence on the cultural politics pursued in our countries and to assist the project members in reaching the level when a civil society organisation or initiative could position itself in this sphere as a source of constructive proposals and sometimes as an advisor for the local authorities or the central government.

Four analytical cultural policy documents (policy papers) were drafted and proposed for public discussions in Armenia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

While summarising these documents, the CHOICE project has elaborated a recommendation set for all those who, as a politician, donor or investor, display interest in the Eastern Partnership region, above all from the European Union nations.

Reflection is yet another component which is paramount for us and includes organisation of places fit for re-thinking the practices applied.

These were not just meetings of project organisers and experts among themselves to track the effects made by the project or its outcomes for the stakeholders interested in addressing the heritage issues. Jointly with their participants, we discussed at the conferences, workshops, seminars or club meetings the essence and contents of the notion of cultural heritage and culture as a whole, as well as features in common shared by every nation involved and their peculiarities. And, most importantly, we trespassed beyond the framework of a narrow topic and put our work related to heritage preservation and use within the context of momentous socio-political challenges present in our region and in the world at large.

Presentation means in the diagram a broad public offer and propagation of a new cultural and political content generated by the creative project (Action).

Project outcome presentation to the public took various formats. These were showcases, exhibitions, updated museum exhibitions and touristic routes, public discussions, crowd-funding campaigns, theatre performances and book or online product preparation.

The CHOICE project has facilitated various publications within the framework of creative schemes: articles, films and books on currently relevant practices of handling the cultural heritage.

One of such products is represented by this extensive publication in the website format, as well as in the printed material format.

The book (both its printed and online versions) contains conceptualisation and generalisation of the project outcomes, which, as we hope, will benefit expert practicians in the sphere of historical and cultural heritage conservation and promotion; politicians, civil servants and cultural analysts who are interested in nascent trends, processes and decision-making methods in the area; and external partners and donors who take a serious stance to planning new and assessing past socio-cultural changes.

The book consists of two semantic parts. The first, conditionally theoretical one contains the conceptual developments by our experts and participants of the program — this is the result of the joint intellectual work collected at group meetings and individually. The theoretical framework presented in the chapter “HERITAGE. The contents of this notion and the meaning of our work with it” has been developed by our leading experts Uladzimir Matskevich and Ihar Rakhanski specifically for our project.
In the second part, we offer the stories of project implementation from each team: the main content of their work, and true admission of the difficulties, conflicts and… ways to overcome them on the way to their goals.

Tatiana Poshevalova,
Project Coordinator for
the International Non-Government
Organisation EuroBelarus

HERITAGE.

THE CONTENTS OF THIS NOTION AND THE MEANING OF OUR WORK WITH IT

HERITAGE AS A PROCESS

It is difficult to define heritage with the help of a historical formation or an event only. On the contrary — heritage is a process during which people use the past as a “discursive construct” with material consequences[1]. Therefore, as a characteristic of society, it is ubiquitous, part of the dynamics of power, and connected closely with the construction of identity at both societal and personal levels.

Within the framework of the project “CHOICE: Cultural Heritage — Opportunity for Civic Engagement”, there was a certain evolution of the understanding (perceptions) of the notion “heritage” among both participants and organizers. During the joint work and two-year communication, all of us have walked a difficult mental activity-oriented way:

- from heritage as a sum of properties of a concrete monument;
- through heritage formed by the territory of a significant site;
- through heritage used as a product for tourism;
- to the promotion of heritage so as local communities could appropriate it;
- to the implementation of complex socio-cultural projects in concrete cities and settlements;
- and, at last, to the process of mediation of the cultural policy in our countries.

On this way, we have changed the focus of our attention from narrow-subject and disciplinary forms and perceptions of heritage to “interdisciplinarity”, and then — from the protection of “monuments” and “significant sites” to the interpretation of “elements” and “connections” of heritage[2].

We have tried to broaden the time range of perceptions of heritage in the post-communist countries by supplementing the well-known and obvious practices in the field of heritage in the present, the historical experience of treating heritage in the past, and the comprehension of heritage as a resource for the future[3].

We hope that the deeper understanding of heritage will allow us to leave the perception of it as a simple set of problems that need to be solved here and now. It will serve as a tool for future discussions on national identity, power and authority in society, not only at the level of our countries, but also on European communication platforms.

“Heritage is not a thing; it does not exist of its own accord”. It is difficult (or impossible at all) to define heritage with the help of categories of academic disciplines. The exact scientific data, historical chronologies, correct formulations of events, and direct citations have little in common even with collective memory, let alone the influence of this knowledge on social behavior and social relations. Both are regulated by culture, and culture is based in many respects on “fundamental values”.

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[1] Smith, L. 2006. Uses of Heritage, (London; Routledge)

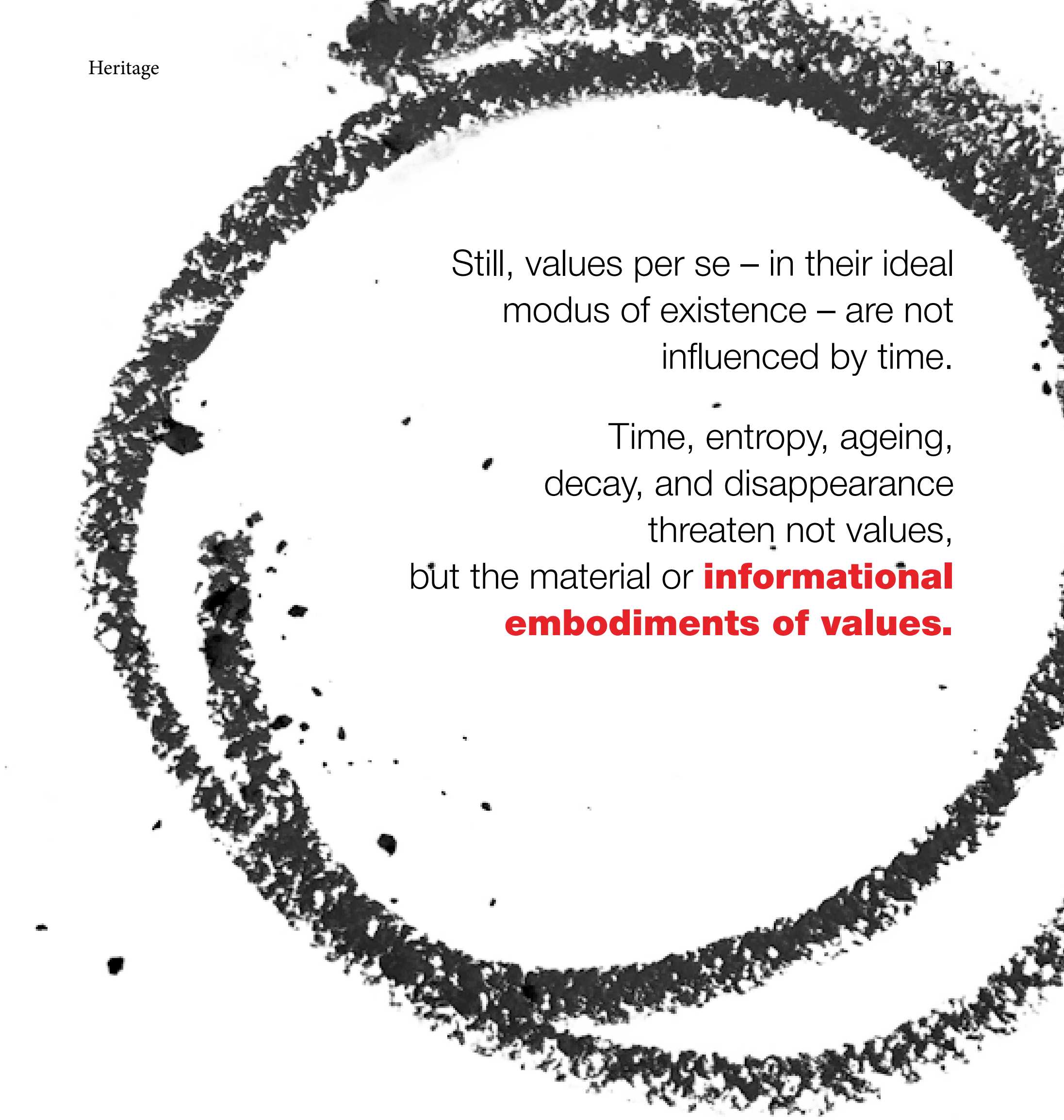
[2] Cultural Heritage and Politics of the Past: An Interview with Dacia Viejo-Rose (Interviewed by Sherman Teichman)

[3] Harvey, D.C. 2008. “The History of Heritage,” (in The Ashgate Companion to Heritage and Identity)

TIME NEEDED TO APPERCEIVE THE VALUE

People appreciate the new and the old in different ways. The new rejoices us; we take care of it; we protect and increase it. Then, when the novelty has worn off, our interest fades away — something that is not new anymore loses its value in our eyes — but only until it becomes old. After a certain period of time, the “mold of time” and “patina of time” provide things and phenomena with new values. “Antiques”, “rarities”, “retro”, “vintage” — the abundance of specific definitions in different languages attests a particular interest in subjects that became old. In some enigmatic way, they receive new values in the eyes of people. Moreover, this added value is absolutely not necessarily connected with utilitarian properties of new objects!

Time is successive and continuous, but an imprint of time on things and phenomena creates a chronological gap in their perception. All things and phenomena in the world have three absolutely different conditions — new, old, and intermediate. We appreciate new and old, although in different ways, but we do not quite often notice betwixt and between. This very intermediate period of things and phenomena in our eyes and in our attitude is the reason why something new, which has become old, frequently becomes useless as well. “Useless” in the sense that it cannot be used in the utilitarian way any longer to perform the functions it is supposed to, i.e. it is not able to independently exist without our care and protection. With no care and protection, it not just becomes old, but deteriorates and disappears.



Still, values per se – in their ideal modus of existence – are not influenced by time.

Time, entropy, ageing, decay, and disappearance threaten not values, but the material or **informational embodiments of values.**

We appreciate beauty, but beautiful things crumble away and the beautiful body withers. We appreciate wisdom, but books where it is written dilapidate; texts and even languages that pronounce it become forgotten. Values are imperishable, while embodiments of values, on the contrary, are short-lived.

Therefore, analytically, we have to treat separately values that define our behavior, life, and activity, and separately the material and informational carriers — the embodiments of these values.

EVOLUTION OF THE NOTION “VALUE”

We basically sip contemporary knowledge of values from the philosophy of Neo-Kantianism of the 19th century. There is a special philosophical discipline which subject is values — axiology. Still, values were discussed by ancient philosophers, too.

The Cynics in ancient Athens liked to use Diogenes’ metaphor of “recoinage”.

This metaphor means that values can change. People can appreciate this or that, and the purpose of philosophizing can be a search for and detection of something that can and should be valued and something that can and should be depreciated. Thus, for naive consciousness, riches are an unconditional value, but the Cynics taught that health and happiness cannot be replaced with riches and that the values of health and happiness cannot be bought. They taught that water and wine are equally tasty (or equally insipid) irrespective of whether you drink them from gold plate or from a wooden cup.

Biblical texts say that the main values are faith, hope, and love, adding wisdom to them later.

Feudal or tribal societies are based on the values of valor and honor.

Christian theologians practiced for a long time the dualistic perception of values and of the axiological structure of consciousness, both individual and public — it is possible to serve either God, or the devil. It is possible to appreciate the spiritual, the divine, the heavenly, and it is possible to worship Mammon (riches and carnal pleasures).

To complete the picture, it is possible to recall the doctrines of the Stoics, the Cyrenaics-hedonists, as well as skeptics who preached “apatheia” and “ataraxia” — such an attitude to the world that excludes any attachment to values as such, because when one loses values he/she suffers. However, the Stoics considered apathy (equanimity) and ataraxy (the absence of passions) to be values.

It is possible to consider for a long time the values in Oriental religions, philosophies, and types of world outlook. It is usually thought that Oriental cultures are more traditional and conservative than the European one. Probably, they are indeed, but all cultures are changeful. Traditional societies appreciate the old in a greater degree. An open society is open to the new in a greater degree. Still, innovations and inventions were created in Oriental cultures not less often than in European culture, e.g. gunpowder, compass, paper and paper print invented in China, Arabian mathematics... The fact that Europe picked up the Oriental inventions and started to use them widely can be an argument proving the Western civilization’s orientation on the values of the new. However, this orientation is not absolute and not unconditional. Japan in the early 20th century and today’s China demonstrate their high susceptibility to innovations and use the European inventions sometimes more effectively than the Europeans themselves.

During different epochs, cultures treat the new and the old in different ways. Each culture and civilization has periods of “renovations” and “conservations” — orientations to progress and orientations to preserve and cultivate traditions.

In his theory of ethnogenesis, Lev Gumilyov[4] specificates various stages of passionarity. During the first stage, an active, aggressive, and creative generation refuses the past, the traditions and habits of ancestors, performs exploits, creates, and acts heroically. During the following stage, they are replaced with a quieter generation that does not act heroically, but honors the predecessors’ heroism; their activity reveals not in conquests, social revolutions, but in culture, cultural creativity, which immortalizes the achievements of their aggressive and active forefathers. When the passionarity potential becomes depleted, there comes a generations that is not able at all to make revolutions; they have lost not only their bellicosity, but also their creative enthusiasm. They are only eager to preserve the memory of the “heroic” and “creative” generations.

It is not necessary to apply Gumilyov's theory to all historical epochs and all cultures and civilizations. Still, it is impossible to ignore the contradistinctions and oppositely directed positions of public consciousness and tenets during various epochs.

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[4] http://gumilevica.kulichki.net/EBE/index.html

Time comes, and some peoples and civilizations start to categorically repudiate the past: “We shall build our own new world!”. The building material for the construction of the “new world” can only be the things accumulated by previous generations. However, these accumulated things lose their value in the eyes of builders who construct something new. At best, the old is simply forgotten and disregarded; in the worst case scenario — it is destroyed in order to make room for something new.

It was done by the triumphing Christians who destroyed heathen temples and sacred sites, reconstructed them at their own convenience, annihilated the idols of old religions and together with them — numerous works of art of ancient civilizations. People did it not only with material heritage, but also with myths, legends, rituals, and national traditions. The former gods became demons. The former values were depreciated, turned into something sinful, or filled with new meanings.

The “progressors” of the Great French revolution behaved in the same way. In a greater degree — the Bolsheviks after 1917. According to the Bolsheviks, in order to build socialism, it was necessary to demolish everything that had to do with the past: “We shall renounce the old world; we shall shake off its ashes from our feet”. Temples and palaces, rituals, songs, and even children’s traditional names became ashes. All those had to be “shaken off from feet” because “We shall build our own new world!”.

It is possible to attribute such periods to the ideology of the Bolsheviks or the radical Jacobins, but many other nations had such periods in their history. It is necessary to remember the catastrophe of China’s “Cultural revolution” and it is possible to recall the globalist crush on disposables and short-lived buildings in the 20th century.

Epochs of progressors’ “Sturm und Drang” were replaced with a crush on olden times. The Romanticists of the 18th century opened for themselves the Gothic style considered barbarous architecture during Classicism. They started to collect legends and folklore, having found out beauty in them, and made the things their predecessors had considered “low genres” valuable. The periods of revolutions are replaced with the restoration periods. Restoration — in the widest meaning of this word. Not only old social relations and order, but also the material heritage of former times, are restored. Together with the restoration of social relations and material objects, there comes “revalorization” — revaluation of values.

PARADOXES AND IRONY OF VALORIZING AN OBJECT

It would be an illusion to think that revalorization is a restoration of values. Even when conservatives proclaim a return to former values, they change these values and fill them with other meanings. More often do they simply apply a value to something that was usual, ordinary, and not appreciated earlier. “Adventures” of values in the processes of revalorization are very interesting and diverse. Every concrete case can become a plot for a work of art or a topic for scientific research. We will illustrate it on the examples of sacralization of ordinary things that were turned into Christian relics.

Hardly did Roman legionaries, while making a cross for the execution of a group of criminals, think that these usual logs would ever be looked for by the mother of the emperor and that their flinders would become sacred relics.

And those who were buying a canvas for a dead man’s shroud bargained for it as it was just a usual canvas and did not care of the safety of the Turin Shroud. Even if these relics were specially made by falsifiers of improvised materials, they were the embodiments of values that already existed in human imagination.

When Christ’s pupils, who came to the Last Supper, searched for a cup to drink some wine together with the Teacher, they sought for a usual cup they would easily forget after the Last Supper. The pupils could forget. The cup could get lost somewhere in Jerusalem. After the lapse of centuries, archeologists could dig it out and present it in a museum. In this case, the cup will possess some value as a museum piece. But quite another thing is the Holy Grail. It is the same cup, but now it is a legendary cup with the ultra-value. Lots of different fakes were presented as the Holy Grail. But if these fakes are accompanied by a certain fascinating legend, they keep their value even when the legend is discredited and falsifications are proved. And if splinters of the real cup Jesus and his pupils used are found by someone and not identified as the Holy Grail, nobody will ever know about it, while the Holy Grail remains valuable regardless of the fact that its material embodiment is not found, that it has been looked for during many centuries and will be searched for in the future.

The Holy Grail is the value that has no material embodiment and none of material objects can be declared to be the real Grail. And vice versa — there can be material objects that are not declared values.

> It happens to many museum pieces and monuments. During some moment of their existence, they are declared to be values and society starts to treat them differently. There happens **valorization of an object.**

Does it mean that before that this object had no value status? Yes, it may be, but it is necessary to determine it in each specific case.

For this purpose, it is necessary to understand the structure of values in their ontological life and genesis, i.e. in the course of their existence, during different periods and stages of their existence in the status of values or in any other status.

THE SUBJECTIVE IN THE CONTENTS OF HERITAGE

The value of a material object is a dependent characteristic — it requires the presence of a concrete person or a collective subject that provides this object with the axiological contents. An object can become valuable in the eyes of a person, in his/her consciousness. Therefore, the value as a subject matter of analysis, as an object human activity is aimed at, has double nature:

A material component of the value: a natural phenomenon or an object, a thing, an artifact, a trace, a text, etc. The basis of objects of non-material heritage is information: songs, myths, wise thoughts of classics, precepts, recipes, and know- how;

An imaginary component of the value: people's attitude towards material and informational objects.

This duality of the value can be considered as a unity of contrasts: objective and subjective. Still, where there is a unity of contrasts, there is their struggle, or contradictions, too, — contradictions between the objective part of values and their subjective part and contradictions inside the objective and subjective parts.

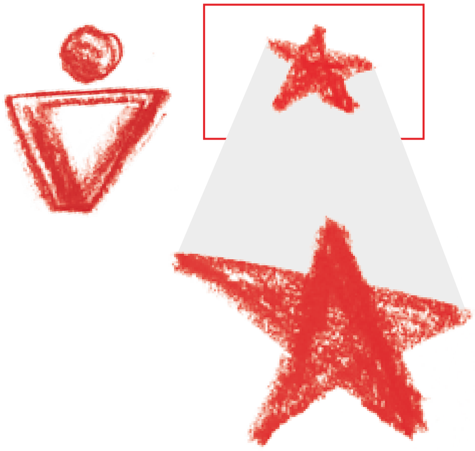


Fig. 2.
Thing and Imagination

Objects of dual nature (such objects are sometimes called centaurs-objects) are always difficult to analyze. Frequently, during their analysis, there appear false problems and paradoxes. E.g. the “problem of antecedence” (what is primary in values — their material or imaginary?). The fallaciousness of this problem has been proved many times — this question can have no answer if it is asked in this way. The psychologism error in the analysis of centaurs-objects is less obvious. The imaginary part of values is identified with certain mental phenomena and processes; one tries to search for correlates of material things in mental phenomena.

The subjective part of values per se has difficult nature. Everything that we can see, hear, or perceive in the world around by other sense organs is treated by us in two ways — a priori and a posteriori.

Any act of perception is regulated by mindsets and presuppositions. This is what defines our perception prior to the act itself. Thus, different colors, figures, sounds, and smells have their aprioristic values. In different cultures, the color of mourning and grief can differ from other cultures — somewhere the color of mourning is white and somewhere — black. The Soviet and Chinese children have a positive attitude towards the red color, whereas in other cultures this color can be perceived as a bad omen.

When we go to a museum, we are ready for special perception of exhibits, usual things, which we would not pay any attention to in other situations, — the violin used by the fictitious Sherlock Holmes or a goose-quill taken out from a bird one year ago, which now is on Schiller's table.

The aprioristic part of the subjective part of values is set by culture, i.e. semiotics and semantics of signs, which was taught to people and which formed their memory, imagination, tenets of perception, and thinking. There is nothing in the world, for perception of which we would not be ready to a greater or lesser degree. We are prepared thanks to our education, the books we have read, and our previous experience. However, this circumstance also has the reverse side — there is no object, monument, or artifact, for perception of which it is not necessary to prepare a person.

Everybody has seen ill-bred children’s behavior in museums. Well, children are children. Another thing is the attitude of adults and active people towards monuments. Recently, in Belarus, we have two vivid examples.

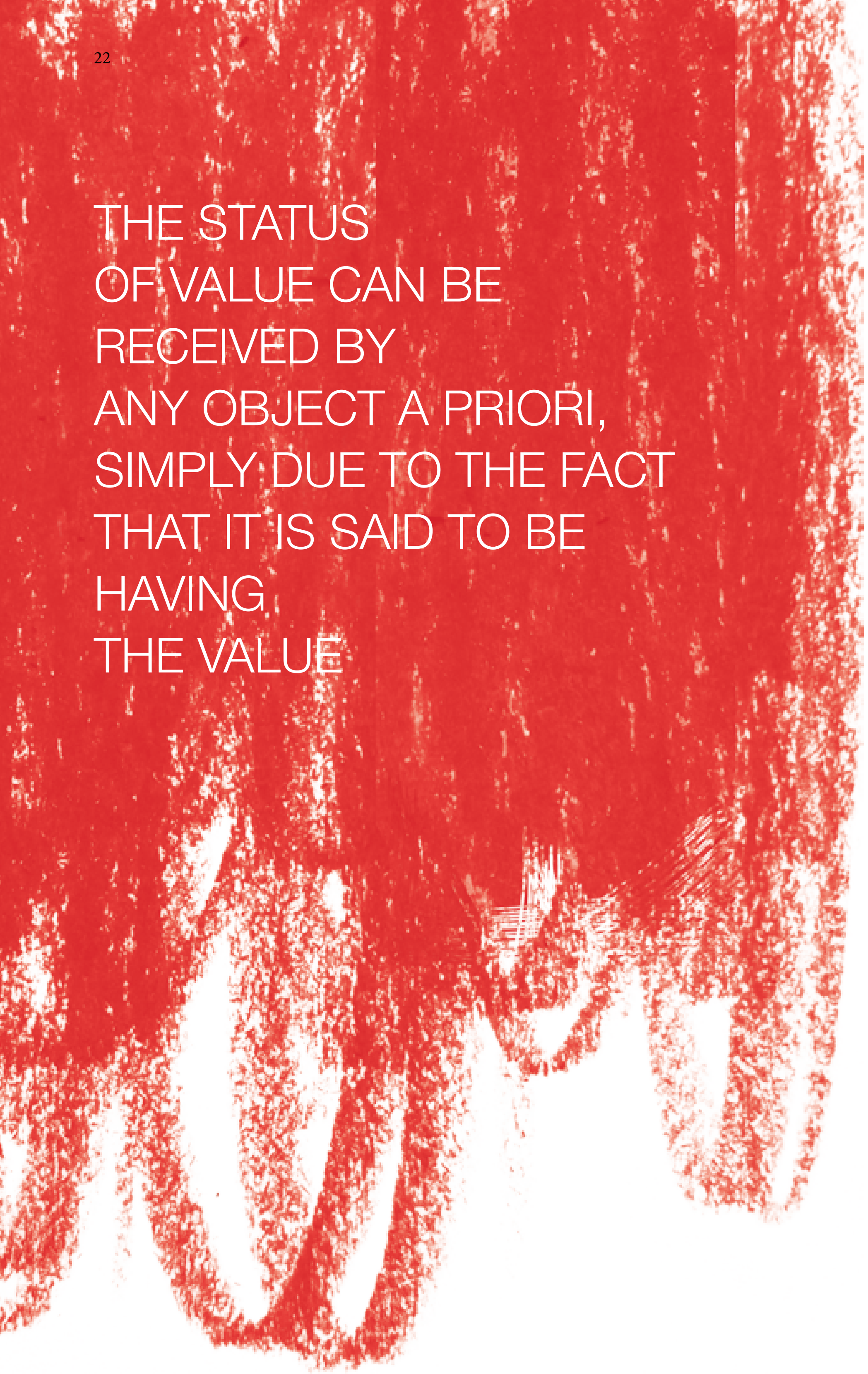
The first example is the Kurapaty memorial in Minsk. This is a place (a forest) where victims of Stalin’s repressions were killed and buried. A huge part of society, in which memory the events of 1937 are not put and which attitude towards the repressions is not formed, simply cannot treat this place as a memorial, a monument. For the other part of society, on the contrary, this place is filled with almost a sacral sense. Therefore, one part without any ulterior motive utilizes this unique place (inhabitants of the neighboring areas try to organize picnics in this wood; officials give building licenses); the others painfully perceive even innocent approaches of extraneous people to the memorial.

The other example is quite ironic. In the center of Minsk, there is a sculpture of a conditional policeman, a usual city sculpture of a purely decorative value; there are a lot of such small architectural forms in any modern city. But this very sculpture is near the Ministry of Internal Affairs — therefore, police officers suddenly began to treat it as if a sacral symbol and a usual easy attitude of townspeople towards this object is now perceived by policemen as defilement of honor and pride of the police.

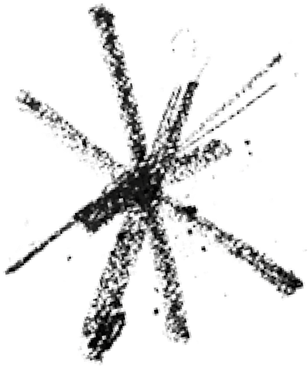
The second example illustrates one more paradox of values — the status of value can be received by any object a priori, simply due to the fact that it is said to be having the value.

Thus, a priori, all works of recognized artists and masters are considered valuable, irrespective of what their creators themselves think about them. It is especially vivid in the attitude towards children's creativity. In days of old, all children's drawings were just scribbles of no value. Humanistic pedagogics aimed at liberating abilities, as it believes that they are initially inherent in the child, has changed the attitude to children's drawings. Nowadays, any drawing of a one-year-old child can be presented during an exhibition; parents and teachers keep all children’s sheets of paper soiled by pencils and paints. It is amusing that this attitude towards children's drawings cannot be transferred to children's music-making. It is possible to present children’s scribbles on a sheet of paper as a creative act, but it is impossible to do so with a kid’s artless tweedle or cheerful knocking on piano keys, although the manifestations of children's temperament and thirst for self-expression in both cases are of the same origin.

The a posteriori part of the subjective attitude consists of the impressions caused by a person’s meeting with objects of culture, values, and artifacts, on the one hand, and of the results of his/her research work and critical attitude towards these objects, on the other hand.



THE STATUS OF VALUE CAN BE RECEIVED BY ANY OBJECT A PRIORI, SIMPLY DUE TO THE FACT THAT IT IS SAID TO BE HAVING THE VALUE



A person’s impression of his/her meeting with a monument or an object of a cultural value is always composite. It is formed not only and not so much by an object he/she sees, but also by the context, the people who are near at this moment, the situation prior to this meeting, and many other factors, including his/her physiological condition and weather conditions. Still, this impression remains in his/her memory and makes a basis of the person’s individual attitude towards the object.

The research and critical attitude towards an object of culture is the domain of, first of all, professionals, but sometimes they can influence the attitude of the public, people’s perception. Authenticity, distinctions of originals, copies, and fakes, discrepancies between legends and myths and historical facts, and difficulties of historical interpretations are important for professionals. Critics’ results of research work, investigations and studies make direct and indirect impacts on values and people’s attitudes towards their material embodiments. Therefore, besides the value structure as such, it is necessary to analyze the activity-oriented attitude, the work and manipulations with values.

AN OBJECT OF HERITAGE — AN OBJECT OF ACTION

Values are a subject of the activity-oriented attitudes. There are things that can be done with them, and something cannot be done.

Let's consider in the most general terms the activity-oriented attitude towards values. The elementary perceptions of it are the following: a person's action aimed at a certain material (or informational) object is defined by the way this person treats this material object, his/her memory, imagination, and thinking.

Still, such perceptions of it are not full as they do not reflect the actual work with values and ignore the subjective part of the structure of the value.

To receive the complete understanding of the activity-oriented attitude, one has to consider not only the work with the material aspect of values, but also with the subjective part, imagination, human and social attitude towards material objects, the value itself. Then, the object of the activity-oriented attitude towards values is:

- Person / people;
- Consciousness, memory, imagination;
- Actions and acts of people in relation to material or informational embodiments of values;
- Material and informational objects themselves.

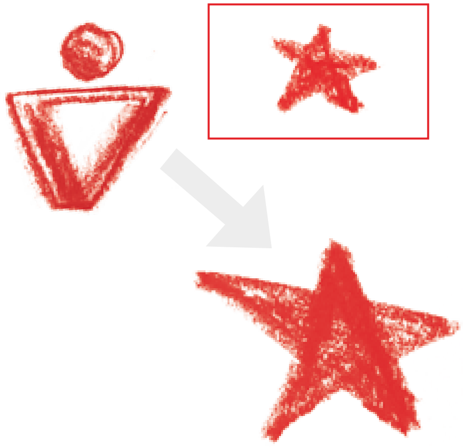


Fig. 3.
From the imagination to a material value carrier: the intentionality of values

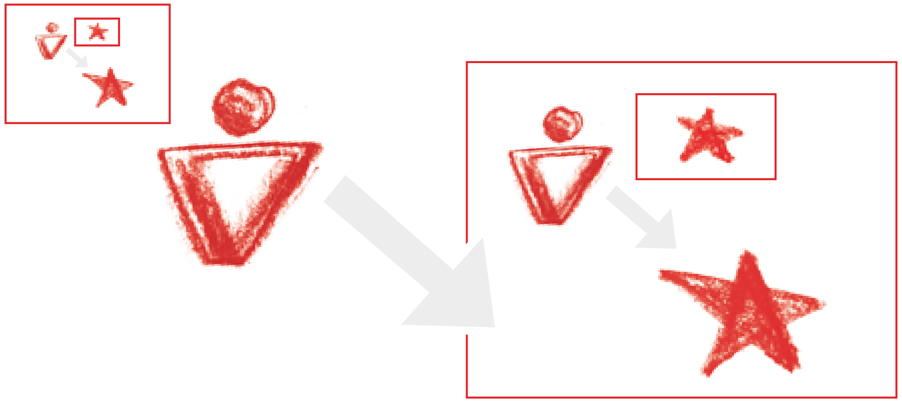


Fig. 4.
Value as a humanitarian object: work with a double nature of value

It does not mean at all that it is necessary to get inside a person's consciousness or mentality. The activity-oriented attitude towards people means a selection of personnel, work with stakeholders, beneficiaries, local and professional communities.

While working with consciousness and imagination, we speak about the creation of images and meanings that can be perceived and acquired by people, literary and art works that form people's attitude towards something, and their tenets and basic beliefs (presuppositions) that cause their reactions and are fixed in the memory of communities and generations.

While working with actions and acts of people, we speak about the standards and specifications of professional work, the rules and norms of exhibiting (possible or impossible to touch), and legal acts.

The variety of actions concerning values can be schematized, standardized, and normalized; something can be forbidden; something can be allowed; regulated; the freedom of creativity and self-expression can be allowed. Still, first of all, it is necessary to just list, at least, the basic part of what it is possible to do with values:

- To keep, accumulate, hide, protect;
- To exchange for other values, to sell, buy, convert;

- To capitalize, restore, update;
- To forge, simulate, feign etc.;
- To “pile up” the value, to make sacral, overestimate, reconsider, reinterpret;
- To exhibit, to be proud of, admire;
- To destroy, modernize, profane, diabolize, desecrate;
- To broadcast in upbringing and education, duplicate, copy, multiply, to create secondary values on the basis of samples and prototypes;
- To forget, depreciate.

People do all of this with values. Therefore, values are dynamic — they never remain the same; they change in time, in space, and in the way of action.

Here, there are both positive and negative actions. Someone keeps material and informational embodiments of values, and someone squanders and destroys them. That is, the activity-oriented attitude towards values per se can be considered from the position of values. Actions and acts have an axiological expression. Some actions are more axiological than others; something is absolutely not axiological, and something can have a negative value.

It would be very good if it were possible — by means of laws or ethical and moral standards — to allow creative actions and acts and to forbid the destructive ones. But it is impossible because values are involved in economics; they are an integral part of people’s life area and the life cycle of objects of heritage, which do not always coincide.

Let's imagine that the honoring of ancestors and everything that is connected with them is so valuable and significant that any destruction of monuments to ancestors is forbidden. How much space on civilized territories would be covered by cemeteries? In many places the dead are buried by breaking older burial places. Thus, not only the dead are buried, but burial places as well.

Burial places, recycling, destruction are indispensable companions of creation. Culture, manufacture, creativity are inconceivable without the recycling and burying of the obsolete. Not everything that is created has an unconditional value, and not everything that has to be buried and destructed loses its value.

HETEROGENEITY OF THE SOCIAL SUBJECTIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS HERITAGE

Different people can absolutely differently provide both material and informational embodiments and creative and destructive actions with values. Such is the inconsistent nature of values and, first of all, the subjective part of values.

One of the main contradictions of the subjective part of values is the presence in society of many consciousnesses with different attitudes towards values.

The subjective attitude towards values is defined by the fact who possesses the value or what exactly these or those subjects appreciate in material carriers. If something is needed by the subject as it is the value, his/her subjective attitude is of one kind and if something is considered the value by the OTHER — the subjective attitude towards the value is already defined by his/her attitude towards this OTHER.

Thus, the things appreciated by the enemy can be defiled or destructed in case the material object is owned by the subject. It explains the acts of vandalism or defilement of relics of other religions or heretics. Such is the destiny of the Buddhistic sculptures in Afghanistan and monuments in Palmira.

If something that is appreciated by the subject is owned by the Other, it can cause not only a desire to buy or exchange, but also the feeling of envy, enmity, and aggression. Jerusalem with its centuries-long wars, or Kosovo — the sacral value for the Serbs, can be typical examples of such an attitude.

> For this very reason, it is impossible to consider the variety of attitudes towards values without the variety of relations of ownership, possession, use, appropriation, alienation, and communization.

Relations of ownership require specifications of categories of consciousness, the subject, and subjectness.

If in the beginning we understand consciousness as the consciousness of an individual subject, then — while considering the relations of ownership — the subject acts as a participant of the relation. Participants of the relations of ownership can be people (carriers of individual consciousness) and legal entities (collective owners — carriers of public consciousness). Strictly speaking, in the relations of ownership, physical persons are only a subvariety of legal entities (carriers of collective or public consciousness). Therefore, hereinafter, we shall treat all notions and categories connected with consciousness, subjectivity, imagination, and the activity-oriented attitude in this way — as belonging to legal entities, collectives, and communities, but not to a person. More precisely, they belong not so much to a person, but rather to the subject that has the status of judicial personality, that owns property in this or that kind, and that makes these or those actions concerning values.

Whatever the subject is, individual or collective, it has the subjective attitude to the world and, accordingly, to values.

“Subjective” in this case means not just opposition to the objective, but first of all the unilateral (the more so as the attitude is always subjective; objective is the being of the thing in relation to which an attitude appears). As subjectness presupposes the presence of always more than one subject, all in the world, including values, is given to any subject from one side that differs from what is given to another subject from its side.

The subjective approach (various subjects’ view on the same thing from different positions) to values generates a lot of axiological problems, tensions, difficulties, and conflicts. The most part of these conflicts is in the field of property, possession, and the use of values. Relations of ownership are defined by the law — they have a legal basis.

RELATIONS OF OWNERSHIP CONCERNING HERITAGE

The proprietary right can be primary or unconditional and secondary, conditioned by certain legal actions and procedures.

How does the primary proprietary right appear? We can admit that in today’s world it is almost impossible to define the primary proprietary right; almost any property in the contemporary world is either secondary, or distributed between subjects of different levels. The exception is only the author's property, or the property of the founder and the creator. Still, it is only until the author's work is recognized the public value. Also, the author's property is often distributed between the founder-creator and the orderer, the investor or the institution. Copyrights can be alienated and transferred. In the areas where we deal with values, we, as a rule, face the property conditioned by various circumstances, specifications, and conventions. Besides the fact that the property on values is distributed between various subjects, it is also distributed in time. The property passes from hand to hand, and the cycle of life of values is longer than the life and existence of owners, both people and organizations and institutions. Therefore, in today’s world, the most part of property comes into the hands of subjects as a result of inheriting.

The inheriting of property with the status of value does not exclude all the things it is possible to do with property: to sell or buy, to exchange, alienate, divide, etc.

Of course, the inheriting is regulated by the law, and to perform certain procedures is required in order to have the right to inherit. It is also possible to refuse the right to inherit. These procedures are needed to protect property so that it would not be challenged by other subjects.

The very notion “inheriting”, although it is the basis of the unconditional property (because an heir can be a casual subject who did nothing to inherit this property), it presupposes that something with a potential value can belong to nobody or to belong to nobody, at least, during a certain period of time.

Without plunging into questions of the law of succession, its legal side, and remaining within the framework of our topic, we should distinguish between, at least, three notions: **legacy, heritage,** and **inheritance.**

Legacy is the property that passes from one owner to another (a person or a legal entity) in conformity with the accepted procedure.

Heritage is the property distributed between several owners in different proportions, with different rights to use, possess, and manage. Moreover, the category “heritage” presupposes that amorphous owners, who have no status of a person or a legal entity and no judicial personality, can apply to use, possess, and manage, e.g., communities of fans of olden times, groups of interests, artists, researchers. Typical examples of heritage are public places: parks, castles, monuments, architectural ensembles… up to facades of houses where windows and balconies belong to private people who live in apartments, but the whole appearance of houses is an element of public space, which is regulated by other users.

Inheritance (public, national, corporate, etc.) can become any property (private, collective, state, or municipal) valuable for a wider range of subjects and communities than for its direct owners or those who would like to use, possess, and manage it. Thus, owners of buildings, e.g. church communities, establishments, private persons are limited in their possibilities to use the property if the building is declared a monument or if society considers this building public property.

The law of succession is indifferent to the value of what is an inheritance subject. Any property can be inherited — from unnecessary stuff to works of art, historical monuments, and religious relics. Something that became private property as a result of inheritance belongs to the owner until it is declared inheritance of a wider circle of interested people. Thus, many castles in Western Europe, which are private property of hereditary aristocracy, can be visited several days per week. At the same time, artifacts, e.g. paintings of the highest art value, can remain in the full possession of private collectors.

The situation becomes complicated when owners are changed as a result of sales or expropriation. The terms of sale can be interfered with by other subjects interested in national inheritance, and the property with rights of using, possessing, and managing can be limited by a number of conditions.

> The basic problem with heritage is that the objects, things, and monuments recognized as heritage of several subjects (persons, legal entities, or communities) are to some extent socialized. They can be nationalized completely, become municipal property or collective property of several legal entities.

The right to manage heritage is given to state structures (the Ministry of Culture) or public structures (NGOs, expert structures, research or scientific institutions). The right to use can be given to professional groups (archivists, art critics, historians, archeologists), contract organizations of builders or restorers, and, in case of exhibiting, tourists and the general public.

SOCIAL CONFLICTS IN THE FIELD OF HERITAGE

The difficult and intricate relations of ownership on objects valuable for various subjects and social groups lead inevitably to misunderstanding, problems, and conflicts.

Conflicts can be as follows:

The conflict of ownership and possession:
Various subjects and communities can claim their proprietary rights to an object. Thus, the land can be owned by one subject and the buildings on it — by another one. An object, which is private property, can be taken under protection by the state.

The conflict of interests:
An object, which is in private, municipal, or state ownership, can be of exclusive interest for another subject who has no proprietary rights. E.g. former religious buildings, icons, sources that are of interest for the church, for different religious groups. A building site of a private builder can be of interest for archeologists. A person's archive can be of interest for the police or a professional community.

The conflict of values:
One and the same monument with a long history, in different periods of time, can be of interest for various professional, religious, or national communities. Thus, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem or the Calvinistic Cathedral in Zasłaŭje (given to the Orthodox Church) together with a change of the owner received new axiological fillings.

The conflict of esthetic perceptions and tastes:
It takes place quite often in the stylization during restorations and in the exhibiting of monuments. It can also take place in authors' disagreements during the carrying-out of tenders and competitions.

The conflict of techniques, methods, and ways of carrying out these or those works (e.g. restoration):
Disagreements between customers, contractors, scientific curators and artists are usual on issues of different standards, traditional or modern materials, which generates a gap in terms of work and estimated cost, not to mention the preservation of authenticity.

The conflict of public priorities:
Environmental, scientific, cultural, national, religious, and local communities can have absolutely different views on the same object.

The conflict of fashion and tendencies:
During different epochs and periods of history, society differently builds its hierarchy of values. During one epoch, the values of progress, innovations, and changes are preferred; during other times, there are values of preservation, antiquity, and conservation.

There are different ways of solving such conflicts:

- The existing social hierarchy takes up the decision-making function concerning points at issue. The higher level dictates its decision to the subordinate.
- The solution of conflicts by means of laws and courts.
- The market way based on the priority of private property over any other kinds and types of property; in separate cases, it presupposes sales of artifacts or objects to a subject who is ready to pay for them as they are more valuable for him/her.
- Public dialogue, mediation, advocacy, public relations, campaigning, lobbying, education.The fourth way is the most universal: through public dialogues and their versions it is possible to change socially-hierarchical relations, laws and statutory acts, to switch on and off market mechanisms.

A MONUMENT AS THE KEY NOTION OF HERITAGE

Until now we have considered a generalized notion of values. In order to pass to the following topic, we concretize perceptions of values. Wise thoughts, formulas, signs and symbols, books, ruins, and natural objects can be values. All variety of values requires a special attitude. Wise thoughts can be quoted, but deformed while citing. However, frequently, re-interpretations do not spoil them. The same is with symbols and texts, which can be copied. The meaning of the text remains without changes in a hand-written kind, in printing, and in a digitized form. The text can be embodied in an original manuscript or in a book, which per se are values. These material carriers of the text decay; they need to be preserved and restored. Songs and music need to be performed. Natural objects need to be protected. Architectural constructions need to be reconstructed and restored.

Therefore, hereinafter, we shall speak not about values in general, but about monuments. Not every value is a monument, but each monument is valuable for some public group. Monuments are not only images and buildings, but also books, drawings, music, i.e. everything that can be perceived or imagined as a monument of an epoch, event, person, etc., and that is embodied in material or information.

That is, a monument is a value, which:

- is embodied in material or information;
- is owned by a subject or several subjects;
- acts as a source or stimulus of the subjective active attitude (memory, imagination, contemplation, execution, transformation, protection, restoration, etc.).

A monument can pass from hand to hand, change owners, and act as a source of different active attitudes of different subjects. The semantic charge of a monument changes in the course of its existence; forms of subjective activity-oriented attitudes towards it change as well.

Actually, the perception of a certain object as a monument is the subjective activity-oriented attitude towards it. In this sense, the material object and the monument are not the same.

A certain material object can exist for a period of time without its monument status simply as a thing, a building, a place in a landscape. A thing or a construction becomes a monument due to a number of reasons, or they are declared monuments for some purposes.

Thus, architectural constructions can become monuments after a certain term of their operation, e.g. in 50 years. It is not an absolute norm, although it is present in legislations of many countries.

Some things become monuments by chance — only because they once belonged to cultural heroes, saints, or simply well-known people. Works of art can be called monuments almost right after their creation.

A CYCLE OF LIFE OF A MONUMENT IS A STORY OF RECEIVING ITS VALUE

At the first stage of the existence of the future monument (when it is not perceived yet as a monument and is not declared to be it), a thing or a construction has some practical or utilitarian value. At this stage, one works with it, takes care of it, but not as of a monument, but as of a useful and necessary thing. Thus, a castle for a magnate is a “fortress", “residence", “house". People used to sing songs and took part in ceremonies, trying to influence the world around them by means of sacral actions. Even works of art, which are declared monuments right after their creation, were simply materials of artists’ work. We call this level of perception “historical utilitarian steady”.

Then, with the loss of their utility and utilitarian functions, something happens to the future monument. Here, it is important to distinguish between people’s purposeful activity and occurring natural processes such as atmospheric erosion, ageing, rotting, as well as people’s not purposeful behavior towards things, constructions, and places, which are needed by nobody, belong to nobody. Scheme 4 puts these events in vertical layers.

First, it is a cultural catastrophe. Cultural catastrophe is not always natural hazards or military operations leading to the destruction of the future monument and the loss of its utilitarian function. It can be just a change of the owner, when the heir has no idea of what to do with the received heirdom. Cultural catastrophes can include fashion changes (not only in clothes, but also in architectural styles), changes of a technological way (steam locomotives, record players, etc.), changes of the population on this or that territory (the Barbarians’ conquests, Shtetlekh in the Pale of Settlement), and changes of dominating religions.

Second, irrespective of the reasons of a cultural catastrophe that led to the loss of utilitarian functions, in a cycle of life of a monument, there comes a semiotic pause. Despite its quiet name, this stage in the life of a monument can be much more destructive than a cultural catastrophe. Castles and fortresses of the Middle Ages, which lost its defending and military value as a result of widespread fire-arms, could be completely destroyed or simply abandoned. In this unkempt desolation, they would deteriorate for centuries, during this prolonged semiotic pause.

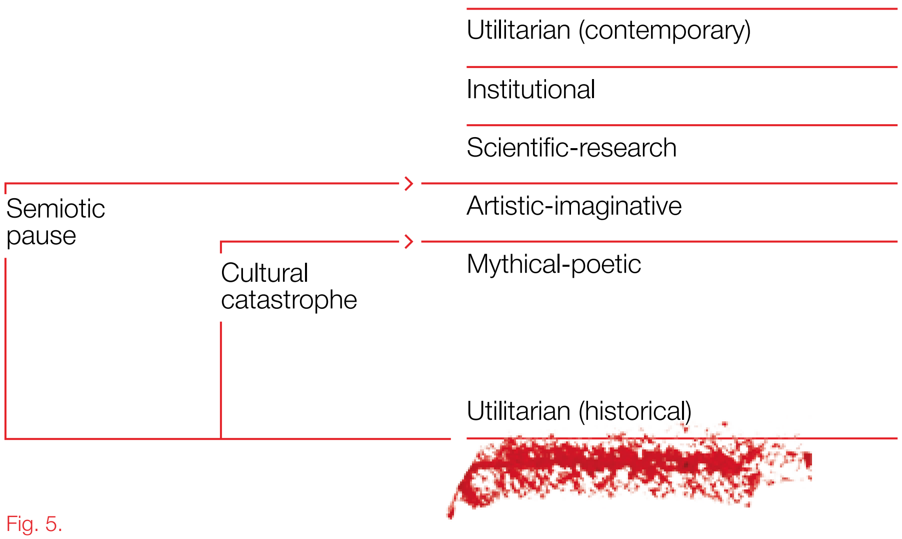


Fig. 5.
A cycle of life of a monument

The semiotic pause can sometimes last for thousand years (a typical example is the manuscripts of apocryphal gospels from the library of Saint Catherine’s Monastery on the Sinai Peninsula, which were rescued by miracle from being burnt in the furnace). In certain cases, the semiotic pause can be limited to days and hours.

Only gradually, during several stages, the future monument will be filled again with the subjective meaning and given the status of the value, which needs special care. A recognized monument becomes an object of pilgrimage, a place of carrying out rituals, or — in the simplest variant — an object of contemplation for tourists, experts, and fans, i.e. it receives a new utilitarian use.

These stages on the scheme are designated by horizontal layers (levels).

The mythical-poetic level, where any ruin, any natural object, and any thing can already be considered a monument, usually passes spontaneously — it is projected and managed by nobody. Then, being inspired by an object of heritage, “creators” — painters, poets, writers, playwrights, and composers — create literary and artistic images. They not only professionally interpret the already available mythical-poetic images, but also add something “from themselves” (the artistic-imaginative level).

In some cases, the mythical-poetic stage of the life of a monument is substituted with an ideological one, while the ideology itself appears prior to this monument. Thus, the death camps of World War II became monuments after these territories had been liberated. Still, the similar Gulag camps are not monuments even now.

Therefore, special work should be organized and started so as to pass from the mythical-poetic or ideological stage to the moment of the real use of a monument. This work includes several stages and directions — from the elementary performative act of calling something a monument or an object of the cultural-historical value to the solemn opening: scientific researches, work with public opinion (PR), legal and standard registration (to provide it with a status), as well as project, restoration, and construction activities.

When certain actions in the field of working with valuables-monuments are planned and projected, it means, first of all, actions with material embodiments, with information carriers. Of course, these actions require to the greatest degree efforts, resources, organization and management. But it is bad when these actions do not presuppose anything else.

The subjective part of valuables-monuments requires not less attention — imagination, thinking, memory. The work of artists, historians, philosophers, and many other participants and interested subjects should be organized aswell, provided with resources, and demonstrated to the general public for conceptualization and reflection.

Imagination is often understood as an individual mental process, spontaneous and self-sufficient. We consider imagination to be a social phenomenon that can be initiated and organized from the outside. Objects considered monuments by society can heat the imagination and amaze the observer. This is a specific ability of art — to amaze the observer, to cause catharsis and ecstasy. For the sake of achieving this effect, the numerous professionals are working — those who are occupied in the protection of heritage, restoration of monuments, designing of environment, exhibiting of values, education of new generations on the material of these values, and finally, the broadcasting of culture.

THE PAST, THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

One of the most important aspects of the social organization of the work with heritage, monuments, and values is the process of broadcasting values.

In the work aimed at broadcasting heritage, there is a regular methodological error caused by the domination of the historical approach to the work with heritage. The essence of this error is that all work with heritage is understood and treated as the work with the past, as culture of memory. But the contemporary approaches treat the work with heritage a little differently — as the work aimed at linking all three time modalities: the past, the present, and the future.

All work and activity-oriented structure of heritage is in the present. Only the material of heritage, things, objects, texts, and information is received by us from the past. Having received or inherited all this from the past, we turn it or not into the status of values in the present. In the present, we interpret and treat the past.

Interpretations and treatments cannot change the past as such, but they can provide the inherited past with values or deprive it of its value.

The very decision to treat something as values or to refuse something the value status leans not against the past as such, but the future. We accept axiological decisions (decisions on values) being based on the way we see (imagine) the future. The things we take into the future and preserve for the future are considered valuable, and on the contrary — the things we leave in the past or neglect in the present are considered not valuable.

Or, it is possible to formulate it in another way — the past, the present, and the future are connected by people's activity. The things we value, appreciate, take care of and work with are present in the present, are the present. The things we neglect, do not work with, do not care of, and do not appreciate have no present — they slip from the past into the future without our participation, without our care.

Being left without human care, without people's energy and will, objects evolve or dilapidate. Sometimes, we notice evolving objects at different stages of their destruction, but we do not provide them with the status of the present, we do not consider them in the modality of the present.

Heritage is something new that we make of the old. Working with it as with something that we broadcast into the future, we look at the past in a new fashion and we understand it in a new fashion. It may seem paradoxical, but the work with heritage can create innovations.

On the other hand, the creative processes implemented by all the social and professional positions, about which we speak when referring to the work with values, heritage, and monuments, expand the borders of the present. In the present, we work with the material of the past (we remember, we treat, we interpret) and with the material of the future (we project, we program, we broadcast).

Legacy and heritage are not only and not so much something that we receive from ancestors, that comes to us from the past, but also what we leave to our descendants and transfer into the future.

We asked the managers of each of the 32 projects to share their achievements, observations, insights and the main emotions that entered their life together with the implementation of the planned actions. As a result, we have obtained a motley and very indicative joint "portfolio" that to some extent reflects the variety of manifestations of the concept of "historical and cultural heritage", as well as the processes unfolding around a particular heritage site: discoveries, oppositions, various interpretations, non-recognition and appropriation.

Many of the problems described in the formation of a culture of memory are typical for other communities that share our common geopolitical context and mentality. Therefore, we hope that in these stories you will find many interesting examples of ways to preserve and display very different objects of cultural heritage, to overcome inevitably arising challenges, to see in the authors of these stories possible like-minded people and partners, and maybe to outline a program for personal professional development. We wish good luck and inspiration!

PROJECT STORIES: ARMENIA

TRADITIONAL CUISINE AS CULTURAL HERITAGE

“Tumanyan Inter-Community Union” Civil Society Organisation

Location
Tumanyan District of Lori Province

Implementation period
April 2016 — November 2016

Coordinator
Melania Pepanyan

Context: Issue Addressed by the Project

The Caucasian cuisine is known far beyond our mountainous region due to its authentic nature and surviving traditions. In our ethnicity-specific hospitality we rival with the Georgian or Abkhaz cultures, but this is a noble kind of competition, because you have to admit that no other reason for rivalry can be more dignified than kindliness of our homes. This being said, it has to be recognised that the traditional Armenian cuisine, which was far-famed not so long ago in the Soviet times due to the common political space, in our days in reality lingers on in some families that are few and far between. Finding an authentically traditional Armenian cuisine represents an ever bigger challenge because of the global market influences, but in Armenia’s rural areas it is still a realistic possibility. It has become critically crucial not to miss the right moment to look into our culinary and gastronomic traditions, to collect recipes and promote some one-off Armenian foods. The Armenian cuisine is our nation’s huge wealth and a resource, which can be utilised in a beautiful, environmentally-friendly and efficient way both for the local economy development due to the domestic or foreign travel business activity, and for enhancement of our national identity. And, last but not least, for the sake of specific manifestations of our nation’s uniqueness, which are still literally present in our daily lives. We have sought to connect in one the “everyday” aspect and the vital necessity of food, given its authentic character, with its concurrent fragility and exposure to loss as a tradition, — so that any one of our compatriots could sense it from the inside, in a simple and accessible for her or him way.

Since our Community Union has by definition a geographic reference, we have rolled out our activities in Tumanyan District of Armenian Lori Province, while being aware and maintaining aspirations that our work will also inspire other regions of Armenia, because many of them have quite a few unique recipes to boast of. The custodians of our national culinary heritage are represented by the elderly female family carers residing in the local villages, which is why they were picked up as our primary target group.

Project Contents

All through the summer of 2016 we had a number of meetings with the residents of the 31 target communities of Tumanyan District, talked with them and collected the indispensable information, in particular, some traditional recipes, which are characteristic of the region. When visiting the communities, we also collected data on the history of these areas, monuments, churches and other cultural heritage of the communities, while the most interesting and inspiring moments were filmed by us on videos, which are accessible now on the Internet.

It was fascinating to communicate with the elderly people, who could revive their memories of the Armenian traditions, such as Vardevor summer festivity, during which young villagers usually cooked such special dishes as “agdak”, “klor gata” or “veal hashlama”. At the village of Met Ayrum we met 85-year old Granny Marus, who was cooking “doshab” at the time of our visit. We have filmed an extremely inspiring video how she cooks the “doshab” using the white mulberries growing in the area. Another fascinating case was meeting an old lady, who was cooking the “chil panir” cheese used to make fried cheese, which is one of the most widely spread, often eaten and favourite foods in the traditional cuisine. In the community Shnogh we have witnessed the process of bread baking and could follow the bakers making dough, setting fire in a special bread baking stove called “pur” and baking their fresh breads.

Following this kind of preparation, we got involved in the main project part, i.e. arranging 3 gastronomic festivals in the communities of Tumanyan, Gyulagarak and Shnogh. The Tumanyan festival became the first and the grandest one. The chief part of each festival's agenda was represented by a taste testing exhibition of the old-recipe dishes featuring all the invited communities, and every dish was to be freely tasted. Moreover, in the two communities, Tumanyan and Shnogh, we held culinary master classes led by the local old ladies and invited chefs. The master classes have provided a wonderful and, most importantly, unbelievably spectacular opportunity to brush up the older generation's skills and knowledge and pass them over to the young people. Many young people and older pupils were engaged in the cooking process and had a chance to learn about their ancestors' dishes, which are now almost forgotten. The dishes were cooked in specially equipped ovens, and each stage of every ingredient's preparation could be followed live. All the festivals were accompanied by ethnic dances and singing, which is an inalienable part of the Armenian traditions.

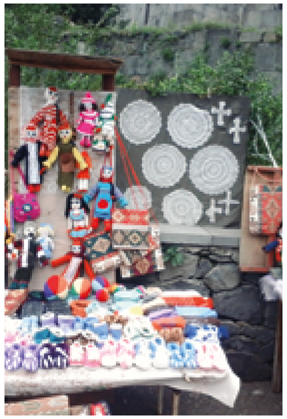
The festivals generated a lot of impressions for all the participants, whereas the Tumanyan and Shnogh community leaders have declared the festival day as a special food holiday to be celebrated every year. It will be the Korkot Day in Shnogh and the National Food day in Tumanyan, when dishes will be cooked after various recipes, including fried cheese, "pasutz tolma", traditional BBQ, "nazuk", "agdak", "tsandil", "gonov spas" and other.

At the end of the project cycle we created a blog, **www.tumanyan.vs.am**, in Armenian and Russian to make the project materials available on the Internet for all those who wish to access them. The blog contains information on all the communities of the Tumanyan region, including their historic sites and populations, recipes collected, video materials, and information on and structure of the other projects implemented by our organisation.

Project Significance for the Communities and Ourselves

We have not acquired great numbers of new partnerships with new organisations; however, we have considerably strengthened the already existing links with the members of the communities our organisation represents the interests of. Human relations at the level of cordial personal contacts are something which is really valuable for us. We have maintained the relations in course of the project cycle, while sharing information and experiences obtained. Thus, in June 2016 we arranged an additional workshop at the community of Shnogh with an objective to make the local public aware of the CHOICE programme contents. Being inspired by the project participants' meeting held in Moldova, we could share our experiences and the conceptual contents of the programme, as though personalising the new approaches and ideas we had come to know and thus consolidating the absorbed materials.

By way of a live afterword to the project, we have held a conclusive final meeting with representatives of 31 Tumanyan District communities, where we presented a general overview of all the project events and actions and received an important feedback. The official community leaders, who used to provide their full support in course of the project and the elderly ladies involved in it extended to us their sincere gratitude for the initiative to stage traditional cuisine festivals, and promised to take over the tradition by holding annual festivities in their communities. Many of them (as was our hope) wished to hold such festivals for Lori Province as a whole.



Some selected recipes have been offered to the attention of traditional Armenian restaurants, and the "Nurik" centre situated at the community of Akhtala was the first one to express desire to use several recipes at its restaurant. As for us, we shall keep on collecting information on the local traditional cuisine on our blog so that, beyond the exploration framework, to maintain connections with the local interested residents.

This small, but very fascinating project has become for us a kind of journey to the historic past of the Tumanyan community, which is closely interconnected with our present and future. Nothing unites people as strongly as the food they share, and we were happy and privileged to promote such rallying.

INCORPORATION OF “KUMAYRI” HISTORIC-ARCHITECTURAL COMPOUND OF THE GYUMRI CITY CULTURAL HERITAGE IN MODERN PUBLIC LIFE OF ARMENIA

“Third Nature” Civil Society Organisation

Location
Gyumri City, Armenia

Implementation period
May 2016 —
May 2017

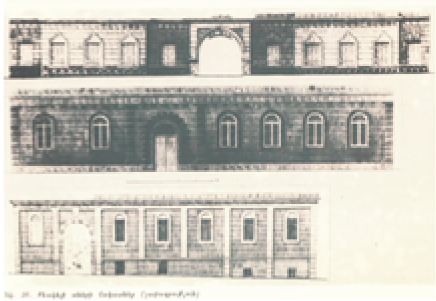
Project coordinator
Rafael Mkhitaryan

Project Background

Gyumri’s “Kumayri” historic and architectural compound is a large urban planning compound, which occupies an area of about 1000 hectares and includes more than 1600 architectural monuments dating back to the 19th and early 20th centuries and formally provided with the monument status as far back as in 1980. These are residential houses, public buildings, industrial constructions, workshops, churches, bridges, military structures, an underground running water system, baths and many others.

This historic urban planning compound, which is extremely rich in monuments, is getting ever poorer with every passing year: many monuments are in a critical condition and get gradually destroyed. The Armenian public is not well informed about this volatile situation as the media environment or intellectual communities lack an appropriate comprehension of the compound's real cultural significance.

It is obvious to us as the city’s cultural and public activists that the remaining architectural monuments are in a dire and urgent need of proper registration and putting on a database, while later all steps should be made to ensure an appropriate protection to the compound’s monuments. With this goal in mind, we have decided to begin with creation of an information source accessible to a wide range of persons, because information-related presence (today on the Internet, in particular) makes provisions for a start needed to influence the situation.



We saw the new web-site’s objectives in:

- Creating an accessible and long-term public information medium on the Gyumri historic and architectural compound’s monuments, which would serve to identify and further promote these monuments among the public;
- Providing the indispensable technical information to attract investments in conservation, repair or reconstruction of the Gyumri popular architecture monuments;
- Attracting traveller streams and assistance in tourist infrastructure development; and
- Motivation for further monument research and laying foundations for monument registration, maintenance and protection.

Project Implementation

In summary, our major efforts have been concentrated on creation of a special topical web-site **www.cfa.am**: Popular Architecture City: Gyumri (Kumayri, Alexandropol and Leninakan). Concurrently, we have created an additional product for a more specialised professional use: software for registration and description of the historic and architectural compound’s monuments.

Both of these vectors of our activities have served to supplement each other in terms of their contents and approaches, since they combined a strictly research-related operation with some technical objectives.

The algorithm we chose to follow may be described using a universal formula for project management: situation analysis (both research into the material itself, as well as studying the already available technological solutions) — creation of three draft versions of the material structure and selection of the best one — technical part proper related to programming, registration and execution of the information product (including its multiple editions) — information publication/ distribution on the product created.

When working on the web-site structure, we sought to achieve a balance between the scientific justification and completeness of the information on the condition of the compound's architectural monuments and their legal status, on the one hand, and journalistic attractiveness of the materials, on the other hand. We have taken the liberty of a ponderable share of the web-resource's artistic poetisation not only because we believe ourselves with all our hearts in the need for preservation of the "Kumayri" compound, but also because Gyumri has always been rhapsodised by artists and literary or political figures who visited the place or lived here. This is a value-oriented component of our heritage, which may not be left unheeded.

Eventually, we have made our final choice on the following content structure:

- Prominent experts on the Gyumri architecture: Varazdat Arutyunyan, Samvel Safaryan, Rafael Israelyan and Sargis Matevosyan;
- City formation history;
- Housing construction;
- Preserved streets or blocks;
- Preserved structures;
- Design and details (a detailed "encyclopaedia" on how unique the local architectural elements are: facades with their components, cornices and columns, doors and grand entrances, windows and their bandelets, gates and ornaments, metal door parts, balconies, ceilings, spring-wells, patios, coats-of-arms, etc.);
- New functional applications of the structures and their present technical condition;
- Gyumri artists: Hakob Ananikyan, Hakob Hakobyan, Minas Avetisyan, Rafael Atoyan, Bagrat Grigoryan, Khachatur Vardparonyan, Ashot Melkonyan, Sargis Matevosyan and Levon Lachikyan;
- Building craftsmen;

- Armenian Republic legislation on historic or architectural monuments. This section provides names, as well as active Internet links to the 6 major legislative acts of Armenia and to one international convention on cultural heritage, immovable cultural monuments and cultural territories; and

- Government-sponsored list of the Gyumri and Shirak Province immovable historic and architectural monuments with active links to the relevant Government decrees.

All the above has required from our experts a thorough research work. We looked into all the accessible international standards related to the creation of online resources on immovable cultural heritage monuments (including peculiarities of publishing information on individual ownership of the architectural monuments). We needed both field studies of the Gyumri monument preservation status, as well as some office research: analysis into the existing online resources, literary and archive sources, works by researcher architects, legislative and legal acts of the Armenian Republic and Gyumri administration, relevant museum materials, works by well-known artists, historic photos and post-cards and other materials.

In total, we have collected about 2000 units of materials: photos, scanned documents, maps or architectural designs. About 875 of them are presented on the web-site: research summaries, articles, drawings, architectural measurements, photos and other materials.

Upon the web-site population process completion, we moved over to distributing information on it. Beside mass media publications, we made it a point to declare officially about our work. We drafted addresses in writing to the Armenian Ministry of Culture, Armenian Urban Planning Department, Shirak Province Administration and the Gyumri City Authorities, which informed them on the active web-site.

We have passed a similar technological cycle, while working on the piece of software related to registration of the historic and cultural compound's monuments. After many months of close collaboration among researchers, activists and technical experts, consultations and testing we were ready to inaugurate the product.

However, due to its narrow specialisation profile and level of detail, to serve the purpose, we have launched a special training course to master the software product. It was taken by 35 responsible representatives of the urban planning and architecture spheres, as well as some special subdivisions dealing with historic and architectural monuments in the Gyumri local self-government agencies and Shirak Province Administration, as well as representatives of cultural organisations or interested public organisations, artists, architects and civil society activists.

Project Impact

So far it is premature to speak about the long-term effects, because the operations related to web-site and software product release have just finished. Yet, already now we can notice a trend to growing mass media interest, judging by publications on the Gyumri popular architecture. Likewise, comparing with the project start period, there has been a remarkable growth recorded in interest on behalf of the authorities to our city's architectural monuments. The Armenian Government has launched a large-scale project on formation of a "tourist" neighbourhood in one of the city's old parts.

Despite a colossal significance of the work done both for the compound and to enhance our organisation, we are well aware that, on the whole, we have just succeeded in laying foundations under further activities related to search for investors and donors for a real rehabilitation of the "Kumayri" compound. We have created an information-related pretext, public attention to which is not a long-lasting one, given the current dense stream of events. Our further actions, including those to achieve our initial objectives, should be reformulated as full-fledged advocacy campaign, which would require efforts by additional experts to be exerted.

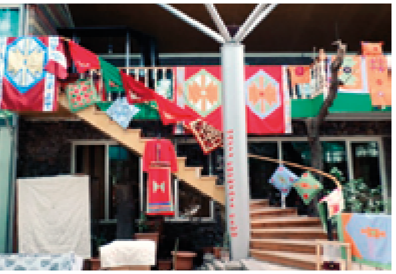
CULTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION AS A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FACTOR AMONG THE COMMUNITIES LOCATED CLOSE TO THE SHIRAK PROVINCE MONUMENTS

“YERKINK [Sky]” Civil Society Organisation

Location
Town of Gyumri and Shirak Province Communities, Armenia

Implementation period
May 2016 — May 2017

Project coordinator
Knarik Khachatryan



Context, Problem and Objective

Shirak Province’s historic and cultural heritage monuments are mainly concentrated in its rural areas. These are remote monasteries and churches or picturesque mountain landscapes, visiting which requires some particular spiritual and emotional pre-requisites on behalf of a tourist. There are all conditions needed for travel business development present here, and the sector itself is capable, to a large extent, of developing the local communities; yet, the process is very slow, although for the reasons, which do not seem logical enough.

The International Charter on Cultural Tourism, which has been ratified by Armenia, is based on a principle, under which the local public must be involved in operating the heritage sites and in tourism development. And, indeed, with no participation on behalf of the local residents the cultural monuments, tangible and intangible ones alike, are likely to lose their living spirit and turn into lifeless structures These places attract the stream of 1500 to 2000 tourists per year, but the local communities, in fact, fail to receive any profit from them. It seems extremely unjust, because the whole world seems to be aware that rural tourism is a crucial resource for a sustainable economic development.

We were resolved to support conservation of the Shirak Province cultural heritage by using travel business for the purpose as a possible sustainable development tool in the hands of the local communities.

Our project was aimed at working with specific communities in the towns or villages, which are renowned for their majestic landscapes and unique architectural monuments:

- Vahramaberd is known due to its numerous “house chapels” and the Armenia fresco by great Minas Avetisyan painted in 1972. However, the village’s major patrimony is the legendary Marmashen monastery, a whole compound of popular history monuments;

- Harich village situated on the western slope of the Aragats mount. Somewhat west of the village there is a big Bronze Age settlement comprising a number of cultural structures dating back to the 3rd through 10th millenia BC. The village itself has a medieval Harich monastery, an architectural compound, which includes two churches, a chapel and a cemetery;

- Anipemza, an industrial town built after Armenia was included in the USSR, but its first residents had appeared here much earlier. Some Iron Age artefacts (1st and 2nd millenia BC) have been found here: arms and a small lion figurine made of Egyptian paste; Yereruyk temple, or Yereruyk Saint Karapet, a monument dating back to the 4th or 5th century AD, which features some ancient architectural elements, is also situated here;

- Sarnaghbyur village with its St. Hakob and Apostle Tadeo churches or monastic compounds Zaghan and Hogevant, which are famous all over Armenia. Sanctuaries are to be found even in some houses of the village. Unknown Soldier’s monument, picturesque caves and holy water springs, and, last but not least, the tonir ceramics constitute the community’s pride and its business cards;

- The City of Gyumri, which is Armenia’s second one in terms of its significance. Its history goes 5000 years back and represents a series of endless transformations and changed images or names (Kumayri, Alexandropol or Leninakan) under the influence of the great empires or natural disasters. The Spitak 1988 earthquake destroyed a bigger part of the rapidly advancing city within just seconds. The USSR disintegration followed by Armenia’s economic blockade because of the war with Azerbaijan has impeded the restoration work. It was not until a few recent years that the city’s parks and streets have again begun their revival process.

Project Contents

While pursuing a dual objective: motivating the local residents to preservation and revival of the cultural heritage monuments and creating an innovative pattern for these communities’ sustainable development, we have:

- Begun with public opinion surveys among the residents living close to monuments (in 2 stages). They exposed that “economic instability prevents the communities from appreciating the cultural heritage as a significant source of revenues.” Based on the survey results, we made a number of proposals to every community;

- Conducted a series of training sessions involving 125 community representatives on protection of Shirak Province’s historic and cultural heritage, on current situation with the monuments and on any possible threats.

Further on, some training participants were selected for participation in business incubators, but the fastest visible and crucial result was represented by setting up the Public Council for Monitoring the Decision-Making Process in the Area of Cultural Heritage at the Local and National Level. It is expected to be a permanent advisory body related to public monitoring in Armenia's Shirak Province; and

- Launched a business incubator in the master class format, which attracted a lot of interest. A condition of participation provided for founding one's own business based on the needs available in the heritage sector.

This initiative has started production of traditional souvenirs and adornments, woollen blankets and cases, pillows or overclothes (with the decorations, traditional for the ethnic costumes) intended for the service sector. All these local mini-enterprises have evolved enough to receive regular orders and to make profits, part of which being channelled to conservation of the Shirak Province cultural patrimony.

Partnerships Started by the Project

Guest-house and lodge owners are getting ready to a professional-level reception of their first guests. Under an arrangement reached with the Armintour tour operator, in 2018 the start-ups will organise their demo work in order to try and attract tourists. The Public Council has under its discussion a project for creation of a holistic tourist infrastructure to spring up due to a network partnership among the tour operators and regional institutions and by organising conceptual travel routes.

The Public Council of Anipemza is engaged in negotiations with the Ingenieria Italia on cooperation with the local women's start-ups. We believe that the new (or revitalised) production units will contribute to the region's sustainable development.

Some unpredicted auxiliary "reasons" for businesses and initiatives have come about, too. For example, lack of email use skills among the local public served as a motivation to arrange a training session series on information technology use to develop the heritage sector in the region. An appropriate proposal was sent to the Gyumri Technopark, which is managed by the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Armenian Republic.

Yet another major challenge is represented by lack of convenient mechanism for the public to be engaged in the local-level decision-making processes. Local self-government should provide for a direct involvement in the decision-making process, but in fact a citizen is involved in it in a passive way, only. To encourage public participation, our organisation has plans underway to create an IT project (as a mobile application) for the local authorities to enable informing the local public and the stakeholders on their decisions. In their turn, those willing to be engaged in decision-making will be able to speak out their opinions using a smartphone.

Project Effects and Significance

Apart from the above-mentioned partnerships, the project implementation process has had some other positive consequences, too. The Yereruyk archaeological monument and the village of Anipemza situated near it have been included among 7 most advanced monuments in Europe. The Honorary Council of Italy in Gyumri headed by Mr Antonio Montalto has ordered some products from start-ups, arranged their sales and follows the quality control procedures (to make the start-ups even happier). The start-ups have also received orders from hotels, restaurants and individual customers.

Betghem and Sargis, Harich village residents, inspired by the project events, are reconstructing their houses to serve as lodges. Approximately in 5 years' time tourists will be able to make their reservations in the lodges and guest-houses without relying on the tour operators' assistance. IT use remains a main priority in enhancing the required competences among the local residents, because now even the community councils almost do not use any internet-based technologies (which fact, by the way, has not prevented one of the villagers to make a solar water heater using them).

By and large, we have succeeded in establishing relations among the local public, administration authorities and the businesses. Businesses are helpful in preserving the cultural heritage, while the cultural heritage, as a matter of fact, becomes a driver to develop the local business environment. The main thing is that the local residents themselves have seen that heritage is a clue to personal and public prosperity and are learning with enthusiasm how to get an income from their businesses. The community leaders encourage these processes in every possible way.

As to our organisation, it has strengthened its authority in the region and built up its competences in the area of cultural heritage preservation, as well as its social capital. We shall need all these inputs in the future, because we are not going to stop here!

MORE RECOGNIZABLE LORI

“Rafael” Civil Society Organisation

Location
Lori region, Armenia

Implementation period
June 2016 — August 2016

Project coordinator
Hrach Marukyan

Context, Problem and Objective

The project was intended to contribute to the establishment of Lori region as a more recognisable and accessible one. The paradox and injustice of the situation is that the region is rated among the richest in terms of its history or culture monument abundance and mind-blowing landscapes, but accessing it represents a serious challenge, in particular, for large organised groups of people. The regional highway, which leads its visitors to the major natural sights of the region, such as Haghpat and Sanahin, which are included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, as well as Qobayr, Akhtala, Dsegh, etc., is in an extremely poor condition. There is a lack of appropriate signs and plates for the heritage monuments and it means that many people simply do not guess how close they may be to the majestic in their greatness and beauty sites, which represent a national pride.

For several years now we have organised here summer camps for children from socially vulnerable families in various regions of Armenia, in order to give them an opportunity of a quality recreation, socialisation and, of course, seeing the Lori Province cultural heritage. Our idea this time was to involve the children in a constructive work with the monuments: developing road sign designs to be tested in the region and to serve the purpose of its patrimony promotion, as well as getting the children together for the sake of recreation and new impressions. When working with children, we inoculate to them from a young age love, pride and feeling of responsibility for our national heritage, as well as willingness to work with it: in fact, we use them as a medium to engage their families and children of the same age, with whom these children communicate in their daily lives, which, beyond any doubt, enhances the effects of our work.

Success Areas

The 2016 Summer School was attended by over 80 children aged between 12 and 15 from various Lori and Shirak Provinces’ towns and villages. We did our best that the days spent by the children in our camp were filled with positive emotions and exciting discoveries. The children took part in sightseeing tours of the Lori Province cultural heritage sites, looked into some historic facts and analysed current information on sight accessibility. They also learned about the standards and principles applicable to the road signs and, eventually, developed with the help from their assisting designers their own prototypes.

Further on, the elaborated road sign design specimens were lobbied by us at the regional administration level during training sessions and group discussions related to the agenda of the natural, historic and cultural heritage protection.

Because of certain delays within the process of our project implementation, our lobbyist activities were suffered a blow at the stage of local level electoral campaigning. On the other hand, an overhaul of the main Lori

Province highway was begun, which highway takes the visitors to most heritage sites; the work is expected to be completed within 3 years. An unequivocally positive piece of news for us is that the newly retrofitted road will be equipped with the road signs made after the specimens proposed by the Summer Camp participants. It means that the project objectives have been met in full.

A broader project effect will be observed in the years to come, upon completion of the main road reconstruction, while the road signs showing the travel routes to the cultural heritage sites are to be placed due to on-going lobbying efforts by the Rafael NGO. The issue will remain high on our agenda to reverberate continuously in the local and regional authorities' offices.

The Rafael NGO will keep on applying the same approaches, while performing its further actions and implementing any future projects. If we were to rely upon our own resources, only, the extent of the projects would be smaller and should fail to involve other regions or towns; however, given any additional funding becomes available, our NGO's capacities allow us to scale up the events to cover the entire country.

Organisational and Partner Network Development

We have used our already available partnership relations to implement this project, while enhancing, when doing so, our links and intentions in the direction of a further collaboration. Thus, the project has been implemented in cooperation with the Gugark Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, which provided the facilities to organise the children's Summer School at. The partnership was initiated several years ago, when arranging our first ever summer camps for children from Armenia's socially vulnerable families. In addition, our cooperation sphere includes schools and the Lori Regional State Service for Cultural Heritage Protection, whose assistance has been instrumental in organising detailed discussions, negotiations and dialogues for a better presentation of the project idea and for motivation towards more strenuous efforts.

We have also involved, for the sake of implementing our intended ideas, new professional resources, such as experts in various areas, viz.: architects, designers, historians or specialists in cultural heritage protection and awareness-raising in travel business development. All the above elements have directly contributed to the development of our managerial and social capacities, since all this team will be available to us, if and when necessary, for implementation of other similar projects. We have worked out an efficient operational relationship with the local and provincial authorities and other organisations or entities active in the province.

Our project did not provide for cooperation with other countries or with any other CHOICE scheme member inside our country, but we shall be glad to share our working experience at the local level and, definitely, to learn about successful cases involving other civil society organisations featuring some similar objectives and similar conditions.

The Rafael CSO is well known in the province and throughout the country as a strong organisation active in the spheres of cultural heritage protection and making provisions for a proper education and training of children. Our target group is primarily made up of schoolchildren, who learn how to cherish the cultural heritage and the natural environment, which is crucial at least for the sake of maintaining our national mentality at a decent level.

ENGAGE VANADZOR. THE HERITAGE OF MODERNITY AND CRADLE OF CREATIVE INDUSTRY

“Boghosyan Gardens” Non-Profit-Making Organization

Location
Vanadzor,
Lori Province

Implementation period
April 2016 —
September 2016

Project coordinator
Sevada Petrosyan

Project Context and Objectives

The chimneys belonging to a chemical fibre factory and a thermal power plant in Vanadzor, which is Armenia’s third biggest city, welcome its guests from many kilometres away. The two industrial giants have become an integral part of the urban fabric and not so long ago used to serve as a symbol of this country’s advanced economy.

This kind of environment, jointly with a mass media-transmitted global culture infiltration, has contributed to the formation in the area of a strong musical subculture: in around 2005 several interesting rock groups appeared, with a certain community of the genre adherents forming around them. Rock music has become a unique example of the Vanadzor urban culture.

Can rock music be considered the city’s vital cultural heritage? We are sure that it can and has to (while the “semiotic pause” stage can even be a dangerous one in this respect), because already now it is capable of contributing to the enhancement of the local and national identity and pride for one’s culture, which is created here and now. There are lots of examples to support the thesis, unfortunately, so far outside Armenia, only.

Vanadzor’s investments in the flourishing local rock music fall short of the needs, which is why we have made up our minds to assume control of the situation and suggested that the local musicians’ concerts should be held. The format is a simple one, but in fact it is a rare opportunity to celebrate, conceptualise and assess the modern perceptible and intangible cultural phenomenon of the city, which phenomenon aspires to become cultural heritage.

With our vision of the city’s cultural landscape we had to be convincing for many potential partners, which is why concurrently we pursued a goal of creating the city's visible cultural map. Only this type of visualised information can provide a basis in the future for discussing more global strategies of the Vanadzor cultural development.

Major Events and Results

- The first project stage has been dedicated to exploring and mapping the heritage sites, in the Vanadzor case, it is the industrial and modernist architecture of the city, as well as its modern music scene represented by rock music. The process related to identifying and comparing the examples of industrial and modernist architecture was conducted by the project manager and a team of interested Vanadzor enthusiasts and represented chamber studies and architectural monument visits. We have drafted a list of architects active in Vanadzor since the 1970’s, as well as a list of nearly 100 structures, which meet our criteria. We have collected a valuable set of archive materials and relevant photographic materials filmed on purpose; and
- A crucial role in assessing and analysing the materials collected was played by two community meetings attended by the stakeholders, local NGO and local authority representatives, as well as by some persons with specific professional interests, such as architects, musicians, managers, etc. The meeting format was used to discuss the current Vanadzor heritage conditions, possible actions to be taken, as well as opinions and proposals related to a further project implementation. These discussions have provided evidence that the community’s will to get engaged in preserving the modern intangible cultural patrimony of the city is very strong.

The meetings were held in the lounge of the city’s puppet theatre building. The building can boast of a long history of supporting the local rock music, having provided a platform for many rock concerts, as well as represents a unique example of the Soviet architecture in the city. The above-mentioned two giant industrial compounds situated at the entrance to Vanadzor may be seen as a critical visual identification of the city.

Following the results of the two meetings, we have put on the online map, which was created ad hoc, 20 architectural heritage sites of the city (accessible on our organisation's website **www.urbanlab.am**), as well as released a short documentary film based on expert interviews and "urban stories" (after several official demonstrations now accessible on YouTube). A similar process of archive research and interview video filming was also applied in respect of the Vanadzor rock music scene and, upon a round of consultations with the local music amateurs, during the second community meeting.

A majestic rock concert was held on the 25th of September 2016 in a park adjacent to the Vanadzor Chemical Factory Community Centre, which park is surrounded by great many industrial and modernist sites. Six Yerevan and Vanadzor performers took part in a public 5-hour long concert and they were seen by about 3,000 persons, including competing parties' nominees at the local elections.

The electoral campaign has had, on the whole, little influence on the project roll-out, not to mention difficulties related to the concert date and place selection. However, the discourse on rock music as a vital aspect of the local cultural image and heritage, which we have initiated, was beneficial and used by politicians in their rivalry (which we estimate to be a positive, albeit unexpected effect). A fresh and differing point of view on the sites, which the local community saw as obsolete and unworthy of attention, has caused a certain commotion, but also provided an opportunity to establish a dialogue with the local authorities. By and large, against the background of a bitter electoral campaigning and disputes initiated by some parties, the local authorities have provided to us their support to the fullest extent. The concert was held on Armenia's European Heritage Days and was included on the list of the events promoted also by the Ministry of Culture of Armenia, Council of Europe and the Delegation of the European Union in Armenia.

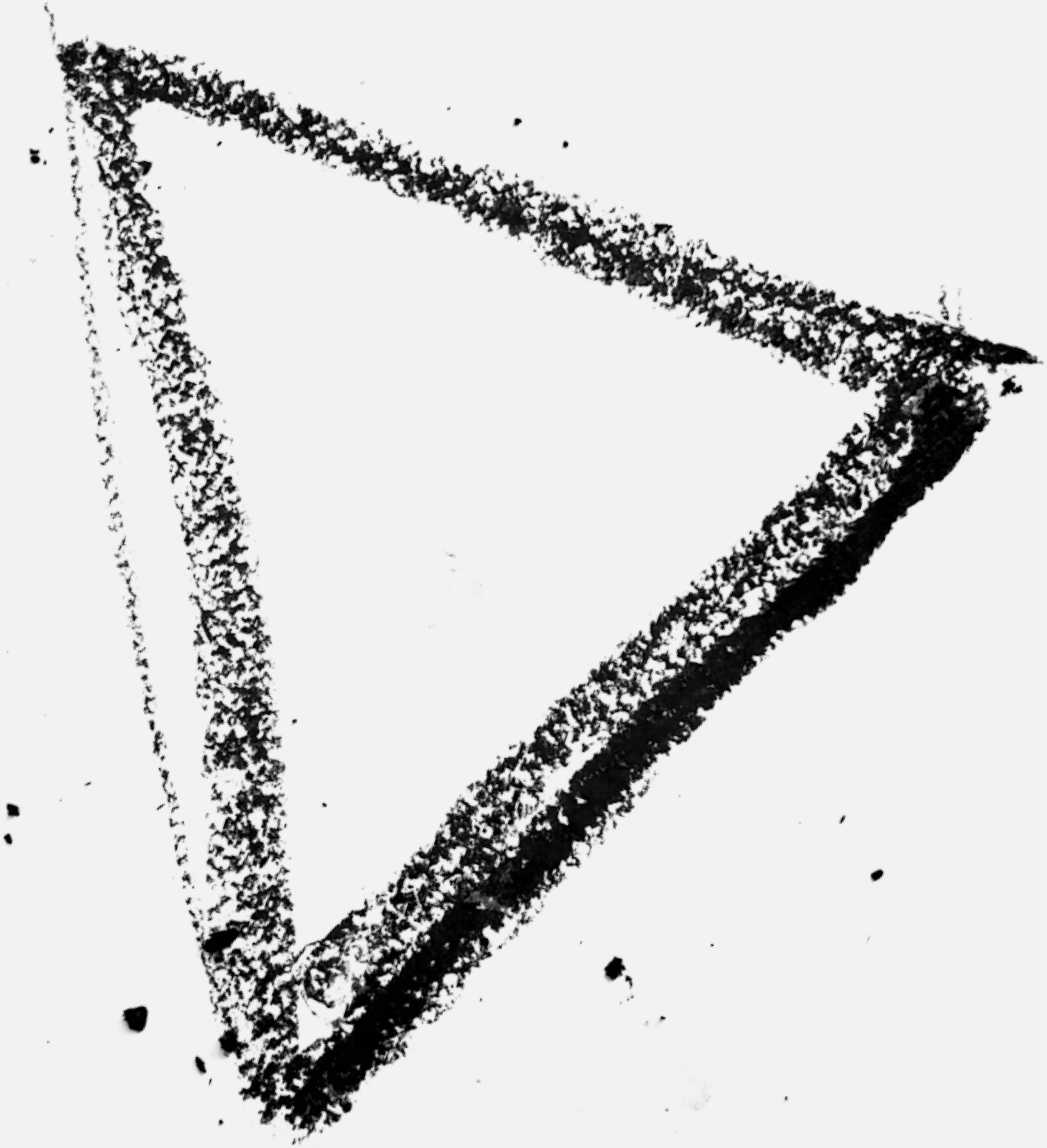
Project Extension Needed

The final project presentation was held in November 2016 for more than a hundred persons, who are not indifferent to the quality of the local cultural environment; the presentation opportunity was used for the short documentary film preview. The positive response was, undoubtedly, important, but our project has only brushed against the iceberg top. No one worked before us in a relatively young industrial city with the issues related to the cultural resources needed for the urban development or to the significance of its cultural and creative identity. We have succeeded in identifying the range of topics and the amount of work to be done in the future.

Our general common objective was to raise awareness about the modern tangible or intangible phenomenon, which may be perceived as heritage. We do believe that the project has achieved its intended result from the viewpoint of awareness-raising. Other effects dealing with the strategic use of heritage as a development resource either are long-term in their essence and therefore will in reality be assessed later, or need new cycles of systematic activities; in fact, drafting an action programme or advocacy campaign, while ignoring importance of cultural heritage.

One of our priority objectives to remain in the future will be represented by promotion of a participatory decision-making process, public at large being involved. Achieving this goal will serve to ensure the human practice in respect of their democratic rights for participation within the processes of community building and governance. However, for any continuation and guaranteeing our actions' sustainability at the early stages we shall need some outside assistance: cultural and intellectual communities (whose loyalties we have won) and the local authorities.

We are grateful to all those, who were involved in the project implementation: volunteers and invited team members, who used to help with the archive work, and to the organisations, which have ensured the best possible quality of live sound and video or audio materials. A weighty contribution has been made by the city's other NGOs: Rafael, Vanadzor and Peace and Dialogue, which are active in the cultural heritage, community capacity building or local democracy. We have gained some significant contacts with representatives of other spheres, local authorities and donors, which contacts we shall be only too glad to use for any would-be interdisciplinary projects.



PROJECT STORIES: ARMENIA & MOLDOVA

CROSSROADS OF CULTURES THROUGH THE LENSES OF YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHERS

The international center of human development (ICHD) (Armenia)
“PRO-RESPIRO” Public Association (Moldova)

Location
Provinces of Shirak and Lori (Armenia), **Chisinau** (Moldova)

Implementation period
August 2016 — November 2016

Project coordinators
Ani Mnatsakanyan, Diana Savciuc

Background

This project has united the values and purposes of two organizations from different countries — Armenia and Moldova.

- The international center of human development (ICHD) founded in 2000 is an institute of independent studies and public policy (think tank) that pays its major attention to issues of economic development and social safety. Also, the center is engaged in many creative and social projects urged to get people, particularly young ones, interested in the conscious, qualitative, and active influence on environment, to strengthen the feeling of local identity and connection with previous generations through tradition.

- PRO-RESPIRO represents the interests of the professional community of young photographers in Moldova; its tasks are to reveal people’s creative potential, to help the development of the general level of culture of the community with the help of out-of-school and out-of-class programs dedicated to professional activities. The organization was born inside the professional community during the recent years after a number of photo exhibition projects.

At the first stage of the competitive selection CHOICE-Armenia, the ICHD presented a concept of the project “Crossroads of cultures of the EaP countries through objectives of young photographers”. The photo project was aimed at getting the young generation interested in non-material cultural heritage in an interesting and unostentatious way.

In its turn, at the first stage of CHOICE-Moldova, PRO-RESPIRO presented a concept of the project «Cultural heritage of the Ocnita District — the world that will be revealed». Popularization of the cultural heritage of the Ocnita District at local and regional levels by means of contemporary photography was the project main objective. However, it did not receive enough points. As a result, PRO-RESPIRO were invited to participate as partners in the project with similar main objectives presented by the ICHD. The declared purpose remained the same — dialogue of national cultures of the two EaP countries and the development of the non-material heritage of local communities.

The basic practical idea of the project is to represent visually cultural heritage with the help of semiprofessionals and young amateur photographers; both organizations think that it can get youth interested in non-material heritage and make them respect features of culture of other people.

Project Contents

Advancement of the basic values — cultural integration between generations and nations, intercultural solidarity and mutual understanding. We have implemented several important actions/events from photo courses and immersion in the cultural context to versatile public representations of creative works.

The first stage of the project took place in August 2016 in Gyumri, the Shirak Province, and the village of Akhpat, the Lori Province, Armenia, where the ICHD organized a series of master classes with professional photographers from Moldova and Armenia. Sergei Khakobyan, Edgar Martirosyan, Anatolie Poiată, and Diana Savciuc carried out a master class in the village of Hagpat, and Vigen Mnoyan, Gor Sevosyan together with Nikolai Miniuc and Ecaterina Caplevațchi — in Gyumri. Their pupils were 20 young photographers from the Provinces of Shirak and Lori, who had passed a special selection. Their practice was in the most picturesque and significant, from the point of view of heritage, locations in Armenia — the village of Akhpat, in the Akhpat monastery, and the monastery of Odzun, Lake Sevan, and Sevanavank. Gyumri is the cultural center of Armenia; it became an excellent platform for a photo plein air; at end of the master class, the group visited the monastery of Marmashen.

Professionals and amateur photographers’ teamwork resulted in two exhibitions organized in Yerevan and Chisinau. Besides works of participants of the master classes, there were creative works of professional photographers from Armenia and Moldova; 120 photos were presented. The exhibition in Yerevan opened in August 2016 and in Chisinau — in September 2016.

The participants’ works reflect various displays of non-material and material cultural heritage, including customs and traditions of local communities, monuments of natural and architectural heritage, vivid and recognizable images of usual inhabitants of Moldova and Armenia. Both exhibitions were attended by numerous figures of culture and art, representatives of the professional community of photographers, and other categories of spectators interested in the work of professional photographers and in the cultural heritages of our countries. In Chisinau, there were representatives of the Armenian Diaspora in Moldova.

The exhibitions were visited by three hundred people; the number of visitors of our joint electronic photo catalog was more than a thousand. During the master classes, the ICHD together with photographers-experts made a decision to create an electronic catalog of participants’ works on the resource www.500px.com. 83 works sent by participants of the project are in the catalog ARMOLDOVA that will become a basis for joint exhibitions. E.g. PRO-RESPIRO plans in the nearest future to organize a number of mobile exhibitions in regional cultural establishments of Moldova, including in Ocnita.

Expansion of the Partner Organizations Network

Thanks to the implementation of the joint international project, the partner organizations have received not only professional experience in the field of contemporary photography, but also important new partnerships in various fields of culture and heritage.

The ICHD has received not only a good international partner — PRO-RESPIRO, but also a local partner — the National Association of Photographers of Armenia that has helped us to organize master classes and exhibitions in Yerevan.

PRO-RESPIRO became partners with the public organization “Discover Moldova” (“Descoperim Moldova”) that was also chosen to implement a project within the scope of CHOICE. As a result of this partnership, in Chisinau, there was a photo exhibition in the open air in October 2016 — “Chisinau yesterday and today” dedicated to the 580th anniversary of the city. The overall objective of this event was not only to show the beauty of Chisinau during different periods of time, but also to draw attention of the public to problems of preservation of the architectural and cultural heritage of the city.

It is necessary to separately underline volunteers’ help rendered during each step of the project. There were really pleasant surprises: PRO-RESPIRO even found a bookkeeper who worked as a volunteer.

In the future, our teams plan to strengthen their administrative potential, in particular in the field of fund raising and project management, finance administration and accountability. We are active enough young organizations and have every chance to become noticeable players in the advancement and preservation of cultural heritage at the local level and in the EaP region. We will be glad to have new professional contacts and joint projects!

PROJECT STORIES: BELARUS

ART OF A SINCERE HEART

Public Association of Art Lovers of the “Belavezhkaya Pushcha” Region and the Brest Region “TUR”

Location
village of Stoily, Pruzany District, Brest Region, Belarus

Implementation period
April 2016 — May 2017

Project coordinator
Larysa Bytsko

Context and Problem Solved by the Project

The project is aimed at popularizing and rescuing from oblivion the creative heritage of the National Master of Belarus, woodcarver Mikola Tarasiuk. The master is known for his unique collection of wooden works that reflect an original way of life of Belarusian peasants in the second half of the 20th century. Tarasiuk created a museum in his manor and called it “Memoirs of the native land”. His creativity was the first to be included in the State list of elements of non-material historical-cultural heritage of Belarus in the Brest Region in 2008. Tarasiuk's wooden figures are worth being included in the world encyclopedia of naive art and exhibited in the best museums of the world. There are documentary films about him and a biographic book, but the museum itself is on the verge of disappearance.

The overall objective of the project was to preserve and develop traditional regional culture by teaching the art of woodcarving and comprehension of the uniqueness of the historical-cultural heritage of the region, the creativity of the famous master of woodcarving Mikola Tarasiuk as an element of the local tradition and cultural heritage of Belarus.

What We Implemented

The main action of the project is the performance “Memory Shelter” in the genre of the Belarusian traditional theater Batleika. We wanted to draw attention of the public, mass media, researchers, ethnographers, local community, and experts on culture to the problem of preservation of Tarasiuk’s creative heritage and to develop a further concept of preserving and rescuing from oblivion the name of the Master.

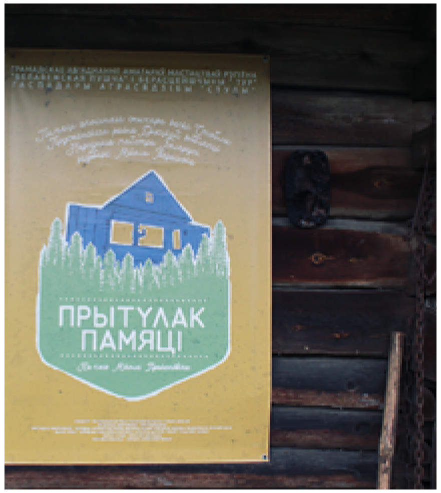
The creation of the play in the Batleika genre was quite difficult and creative, but it was a really interesting and unforgettable experience for all. Our public association unites well-known masters of arts and crafts, artists from the Brest Region. The preparation of the play united our organization and made it more significant and known.

The premiere of the performance was on May, 13th, 2017 in Stuly. It was dedicated to the 85th anniversary of Mikola Tarasiuk. There were more than 60 spectators who came not only from the Brest Region and Minsk, but also from Russia and Poland. There were representatives of the regional mass media.

After the premiere, there was a round table to discuss the problem of preserving the national master’s heritage and popularizing his creativity. 25 people took part in this event — there were journalists, officials, civic activists, historians, and ethnographers. The audience came to a conclusion that it was necessary to create Mikola Tarasiuk's foundation. The round table decided that the performance must be demonstrated in Belarus and abroad as it is extremely important for the popularization of the name of Mikola Tarasiuk and preservation of his memory and creativity.

Partnerships (and Conflicts)

Together with the implementation of the project within the scope of the CHOICE program, we have implemented one more project — “Mikola Tarasiuk-2016”, the winner of the contest SOCIAL WEEKEND-7. As a result of this project, in the village of Stoily, a sculptural composition and an informational stand about the master’s life and creativity were installed. And at that moment we had a conflict with the relatives and heirs of the national



master, who claimed the project team about the use of the name of Nikolai Tarasyuk. For several months we could not find mutual understanding. For this reason, we gave our production a different, more neutral title, “The Shelter of Memory."

Nevertheless, over time, our efforts to preserve the creative heritage of N. Tarasyuk brought a positive result, and the conflict has been resolved. The master’s successors began to appreciate and treat their father’s and grandfather’s works in a new way: the memorial estate “Memoirs of the native land” started to work again.

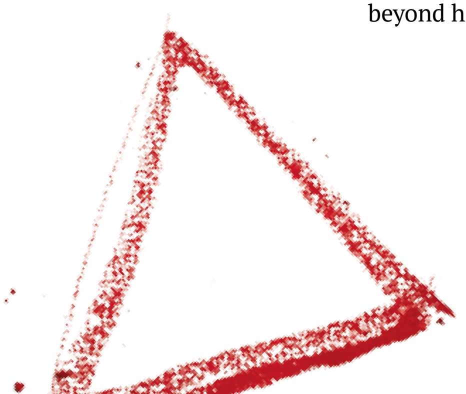
In the course of the project implementation, we built interaction with a secondary school in Shcherchava and secondary school №3 in Zhabinka. We invited the local community to participate in master classes and the schools received an opportunity to teach their pupils woodcarving with the help of eminent masters; the pupils became interested in the sources of national traditions, traditional way of life, native tongue, and culture of their small homeland.

Throughout the whole period — from the text of the play and the course of rehearsals to the premiere — the project team received consultations and recommendations from the doctor of art criticism V. A. Labacheuskaya. She is the author of the book about Mikola Tarasiuk and one of the main experts on his creativity and life history. Her help allowed us to present more precisely some important details of the master’s character and behavior in the play.

The professionals who worked on the play (the director and the sound producer) liked to work with the team of the project so much that they are ready to continue cooperation with us free-of-charge in other lines of the activity of our organization and our partner in Stuly.

During one of seminars of the CHOICE project, there was a meeting with the well-known restorer of the Belarusian Batleika Anna Vyhonnaya who have been engaged in this art for more than 25 years. Anna became one of the main advisers during the creation of our Batleika performances. She advised our creative group — before to present a performance about Mikola Tarasiuk's creativity and life, to create the classical Batleika play “Herod the Great”. Active members of our organization began to create this performance — it united us very much. It was the first joint product for the eight years of existence of our association, which was successful and really became an object of pride of each participant of this project. The project team is very grateful to Anna because when we were creating the performance “Memory Shelter”, we already knew subtleties and specificity of Batleika plays. When we were creating the play Herod the Great, we actively worked on the creation of the main product — the performance about the master’s life and creativity. The playwright had done really titanic work, having studied all video and audio archives about Mikola Tarasiuk, which had been collected by the creative group. The work of the painter and the sound producer also deserves deep respect. Thus, instead of one, we created two performances in the Batleika genre — the first one is pilot, the other one is the main product.

The work aimed at actualizing the master’s memory will not end — we will continue to fill with creative life his native places and the performance, as we believe, will tell about Tarasiuk far beyond his native village.



BREST STORIES GUIDE

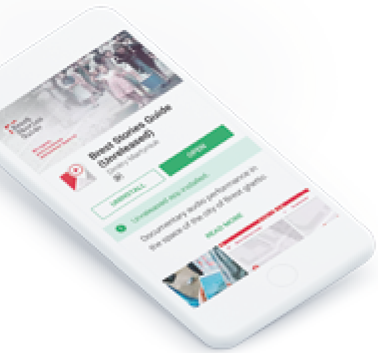
Initially: ANTI-AMNESIA NAVIGATOR

“KH Space” Cultural Institution

Location
Brest, Belarus

Implementation period
April 2016 — May 2017

Project coordinators
Aksana Haiko, Sviatlana Haidalionak



Context. Problem. Objectives

There are many significant parts of the history of Brest, which are not represented in the school textbooks, museums or tourist routes. The history of life and destruction of the Jewish community of Brest during the Second World War is one of them. The very memory of the life and the contribution of the Jews to the development of Brest has disappeared as result of the Holocaust and the destruction of buildings and places associated with the Jews. Returning these memories has become the goal of our project.

We could not look past this issue since half of the city’s inhabitants having been killed is the biggest disaster in the history of Brest. However the memory of these events is not there in the narratives of Brest history. The word “Holocaust” does not appear in the Belarusian textbooks, and the very topic of Holocaust is still not being openly discussed.

We decided to “squeeze” the present narrative of Brest's “heroic” past. The myth of the heroic defense of the fortress overshadowed the incredibly cruel death of the city's residents as well as the tortures and deaths of thousands of prisoners of war, all of which is also not common to mention when talking about Brest. Neither the Brest citizens nor the tourists have got any clue about another history apart from the history of the heroes defending the Brest Fortress. We found it important for Brest to get a history told not by the creators of myths and textbooks, but by its actual citizens.

Another challenge was the existence of a strict censorship of works of art. The Kryly Khalopa Theatre has faced bans of performances, commissions and other restrictions for more than 10 years. We wanted to create a product that would be impossible to make a subject to censorship.

Project Content

The audio-play, which is a part of the Brest Stories Guide mobile application, as well as the web-site **breststories.com**, are the objects of all our efforts. It is based on the materials from archives and the interviews with the eyewitnesses of the events related to the extermination of Jews in 1941-1942, which may characterize the play as a source for studying the history of Brest and Belarus. In addition the project is an innovative theatrical and tourism product and it is distinguished by an unconventional approach to work with historic heritage.

The viewer / listener is given an opportunity to interactively participate in the play that takes place in the city. The main material of the production is comprised of the voices of witnesses of events and a map marked with the key places of Jewish heritage and historical events.

The project was presented on May 27, 2017 and caused great interest from the public. Even at the stage of pre-presentation the feedback from the Facebook followers demonstrated that people see our important influence in changing their image of Brest. The media expressed their interest at the early stages too: many journalists from the Brest media were asking for an interview already a month before the presentation.

Acquired Partnerships

Working with Yefim Basin, a representative of the Jewish organization Hesed-David gave positive results. Being an expert and a researcher of Brest and the Jewish topic of the city for a long time, he shared the materials yet unknown to wide public such as books published in New York and interviews with people who left Belarus for Israel and the United States. He also helped to establish cooperation with other Jewish organizations for further possible collaboration on the project.

The communication and the work with Christian Ganzer, the German historian who has been involved in the history of the Brest Fortress for about 10 years and has publications in the Belarusian media as well as a book about the Brest Fortress proved beneficial. He supported us with the testimonies of German eyewitnesses

to the events in Brest and photos from his archive, helped us find materials and assessed our project very positively. In this particular case fruitful cooperation was established on the grounds of the similar views on the problem.

The attempt to establish collaboration with another Brest historian and an expert on the Jewish history did not have any positive results, as we met a rather hostile and distrustful attitude towards the initiative and the fear that we would use the materials collected by the expert for gaining personal profit. On the contrary, a Brest historian Irina Vauraniuk helped us with advice and references to the sources.

We managed to form a team that worked in harmony and communicated quite closely, despite the heterogeneity of tasks (script and direction, IT, sound record and audio mixing, work with historical materials, etc.). We made every effort to ensure that everyone participated in the decision making process and the creative component of the project one way or another. We organized regular working meetings of the entire project team.

Project Value for the Organization

We came up with an innovative project, and many of its tasks were completely new for us: creating a mobile application and a website, connecting the audio and the map, other technical issues, and a deep immersion in archival sources and documents as well. The absence of a clear initial idea of the workload became our internal problem. It turned out that we did not fully realize what the workload is and how much time it would actually take to do everything. As a result, many team members got much more work, and some people took part in the project almost as volunteers.

In addition to the major boost in the professionalism and project management skills, the Brest Stories Guide undoubtedly influenced the organizational development of our theater on the whole. The CHOICE project team provided huge support in the form of consultations with Aliaksey Kanstantsinau, which changed the image of the organization in many ways today. In particular, we went through a rather difficult period of internal development: we completed the process of registering our initiative as a social and cultural institution, formalized the relations within a very creative team by actually restructuring it, identified the functional "blind spots" in the organization and found new people to fill in these gaps. It was the first time for us to realize a project with so many experts involved — about 20 people. By expanding the circle of experts, we also changed our method of work, which is fairly closed under the usual conditions.

The idea to attract actors from the local drama and puppet theaters — a community we couldn't quite reach out to before — was a big success. As a result, three Honored Artist of the Republic of Belarus as well as several other professional actors took part in the work on the project. Working on audio-play became a new professional experience for them as well.

We used the services of Ahniya Asanovich, an external professional PR expert, and we can already see the benefits of this cooperation. We have reviewed our position on the information campaign and its impact on the development and the promotion of the project. The thematic workshop of the CHOICE program also helped a lot and allowed us to receive a consultation with Mariya Hvardzeitsava later on. After that we were contacted by the Brest experts on social networks promotion who kindly suggested sharing their experience of public relations gratuitously. In the end, we conducted a much broader information campaign than it had been originally planned.

We already see the interest in our project coming from the representatives of very diverse fields. To date, we have received an invitation to run a workshop on the intersectoral projects technology within the framework of the European Humanities University conference in Vilnius. We have also been invited to present the project at the Festival of Three Cultures in Wlodawa, Poland. Urbanists take interest in the project as well.

We are planning to continue the work on the project as it was initially conceived to embrace broader topics. We hope to translate the play into English with the help of the Jewish community so as to make it accessible to foreign tourists. There are also plans to make other "trails" of the Brest Stories Guide, which would be related to the women's history of Brest. This is important to us as women in the history of the city lack representation, while tourists and locals bear the "heroic male" image of Brest.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE UNOVIS — THE CULTURAL CODE OF VITSIEBSK CITY DEVELOPMENT

The Cultural-Educational Establishment “Vitsiebsk For Me”

Location
Vitsiebsk, Belarus

Implementation period
April 2016 — May 2017

Project coordinator
Valiantsina Kirylava

Context: Problems Solved by the Project

The world-wide recognized founders of the Vitsiebsk national art school — Marc Chagall, Kazimir Malevich, and El Lisitsky — created almost a century ago the association UNOVIS (“The Champions of the New Art”) that changed the aesthetic-philosophical model of the visual world. UNOVIS influenced much fine arts and the art theory, philosophy, literature, polygraphic industry, theater, cinema, architecture, and city planning. Documentary and art values of UNOVIS heritage are in museums of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Paris, Amsterdam, Strasbourg, Cologne, and New York. Meanwhile, Vitsiebsk, the city that is known for its powerful art school, is only getting started to recognize its heroes.

It is attested by the appearance of the Vitsiebsk Contemporary Art Center, as well as by scientific readings and plein airs, street art, and the shooting of the film “Chagall. Malevich”. All these events formed the need of heads and townsfolk of Vitsiebsk, international organizations, to revitalize the heritage of UNOVIS at national and international levels — after all, only the external recognition will allow us to include our pride of such names in townspeople’s consciousness.

In this project, we pursued two purposes: 1) to lobby the inclusion of the world famous heritage of UNOVIS vanguard art (1920-1922) in the list of historical-cultural values of Belarus and the list of objects of UNESCO world heritage; 2) to involve city communities in the formation of the cultural code of Vitsiebsk by actualizing its heritage — to use spatial, dynamic, and plastic principles of UNOVIS for the restoration of historical buildings, the conceptual development of territories and concrete objects. All these are called to reveal the true historical-cultural value of UNOVIS for Vitsiebsk, which practically can serve as a socio-cultural, touristic, and investment appeal of the city.

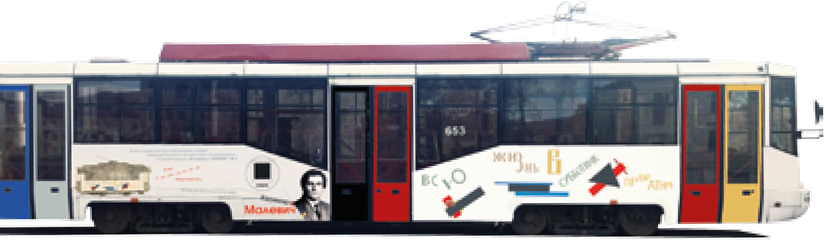
Project Implementation

We have carried out a whole complex of events/actions of different character and complexity.

We invited 7 best experts on the history and heritage of UNOVIS from Belarus; 2 experts came from Russia. All of them worked with archival documents and museum artifacts in the funds of the Vitsiebsk State Regional Museum and the Marc Chagall Museum; the results of their researches are:

- “New graphics, sculpture, and documents of D. Yakerson from VOK funds” (V. A. Shyshanava);
- “UNOVIS Almanac” in the funds of the Marc Chagall Museum” (Y. M. Stsepanets);
- “Artefacts from Henry Mandel's collection in the Marc Chagall Museum — reflection of the topic of the creative association UNOVIS” (A. M. Shyrokava);
- “Documents and artefacts of the creative association UNOVIS in VGOKM funds” (A. P. Lyutsko);
- “Yudel Pen — the final defender of UNOVIS” (L. S. Radavaya);
- “New documents of GAVO on the history of the creative association UNOVIS” (T. V. Buyevich);
- “History and chronicle of UNOVIS in the Almanac and its author” (V. S. Haleyeu).

These works, as well as electronic presentations on the basis of scanned materials, were used by UNOVIS ACADEMY and meetings of the club UNOVIS-DIALOGUE on the basis of the partner art club “Torvald”. This club (lectures and discussions) united many professionals, art workers, archivists, young designers, teachers, and students.



Thanks to the researches, we prepared a text of the proposal to include the heritage of UNOVIS in the list of national values and a corresponding set of documents that were submitted to the commission on historical-cultural heritage at the Ministry of Culture of Belarus.

There was a special social effect among inhabitants of Vitsiebsk caused by the actions connected with the restoration of sketches of paintings on 2 trams and 1 trolleybus made by K. Malevich, N. Kogan, and N. Suyetin in 1920. In June 2016, a group of designers (S. Drazdou, I. Hurko, and A. Konanau) started to work and in September 2016 the trams and the trolleybus with the historically valuable paintings were seen in the city. We carried out a special press conference to celebrate it. This event became exclusive not only for Vitsiebsk, but also for the whole country — TUT.BY statistics said this news had more than 19,000 views. For a year already, the trams have been working as social advertising — they are free-of-charge.

In January-March 2017, we had a contest of sketches “UNOVIS Alphabet” to create playgrounds for children, youth, and recreational zones “Quay UNOVIS”. There were 36 applications from 54 participants from 4 countries: Belarus, Israel, the Netherlands, and Russia. The professional jury chose 10 authors whose works were presented in the second round. In each of three nominations, there were authors of three projects. In each nomination, the jury defined the winner who received the right to implement his/her project in Vitsiebsk at the expense of means of the city budget.

A separate part of the project was the work on 2 guidebooks of special excursion routes and 4 demonstrational street stands dedicated to the heritage of UNOVIS. Senior lecturers of Vitsiebsk Technological University — N. Tarabuko and V. V. Vasiliev — became authors of the texts and design.

Results and Effects of the Project

Despite the steady skepticism of a narrow group of officials and creative experts concerning abstract art and new forms of communities’ development, we managed to implement the concept of space “UNOVIS-FORUM”. We were fully and unprecedentedly supported by the Vitsiebsk Regional and City Executive Committees, rectors and directors of educational institutions, employees of chairs and departments, and children's art schools. Our events were covered in the mass media and we received many positive responses from inhabitants of Vitsiebsk.

As a result of our joint work with the collective of the depot of the Vitsiebsk Tram and Trolleybus Department, its director V. M. Paulyuchkou created a separate section in the Vitsiebsk Tram Museum. The VTTD fully financed the design and now these trams are free-of-charge.

Our efforts were recognized at the international level — the “UNOVIS” topic was included in the program and materials of the Days of European cultural heritage in Belarus. 10 professional art organizations and establishments supported with their written statements the idea of including the heritage of UNOVIS in the list of historical-cultural heritage of Belarus. The Ministry of Culture is going to consider this question in the near future.

Our communication with other participants of the CHOICE project was very important. During club meetings of the project, as well as international seminars, there appeared a platform of sharing information and best practices in the field of heritage in the Eastern Partnership countries. The feeling that there are adherents inspires and helps us to keep working.

We are immensely grateful to all partners — separate experts and organizations that helped us at each stage. Although the project is formally over, in the future there will necessarily be some continuation as we have launched all the necessary details of the mechanism.

THE MIRAGES AND MIRACLES OF ASHMIANY

The Belarusian Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

Location
Ashmiany, Hrodna Region, Belarus

Implementation period
April 2016 — September 2016

Project coordinator
Hanna Vyhonnaya

Context. Problem. Purpose

Ashmiany is a town in western Belarus, one of many settlements that survived several state formations, wars, fluxes and refluxes of cross-cultural dialogues, bad urbanization, and many other things. Recently, the town center has been modernized — this “reconstruction” has covered the historical shape of the town with a thick plaster coat and hidden it from townspeople’s eyes. The absence of a restoration school, which would help to preserve the best and to qualitatively present it, instead of simple “repairing”, is a system problem in the heritage field not only in Ashmiany, but all over the country — it is mentioned very often in the mass media as probably the main threat to monuments in Belarus. However, another aspect — the history of a site in people’s individual memory — is often not paid attention to. Therefore, in Ashmiany, our team aimed at returning the living history of the town center — its shape in the memory of local residents, their personal memoirs, local legends, and everything that is able to generate an integral image of Ashmiany, its rich history and national importance. Besides its uniqueness, we were also interested in the signs of typical Belarusian cultural paradoxes, e.g. Orthodox churches, Catholic churches, and Jewish synagogues standing together with the Soviet-style Town Administration. Thus, our actions were aimed at forming mythical-poetical perceptions of the historical center of Ashmiany in the local population’s consciousness. For this purpose, we chose the format of a theatrical play as synthetic narrative art.

Project Contents

The basic practical tasks of the project were to work out a scenario of and to carry out the theatricalized event called “The Mirages and Miracles of Ashmiany”.

In order to create the future scenario, it was offered to try to take memories of the town out of “memory storerooms”, but not the habitual memoirs, with which our official press works, — we had another goal: it was necessary to remember your own perception of the town space, people who live(d) in it, and insignificant, but important for a person town events. The local newspaper “Ashmianski Viesnik” joined the project — it specially opened the column “From Memory Storerooms” and updated it weekly. There were some amusing incidents — individual memory has its specificity and readers even started to struggle for its objectivity: in their comments they refuted these or those described stories. Together with the newspaper, we had to prepare an article about features of human memory. People of Ashmiany faced the unusual for them ambiguousness of treating events in the regional mass media; for them, it was a new experience of analyzing memory of a town community.

On the basis of the collected materials, the first variant of the scenario was written; a process of choosing actors from local residents was begun. It was initially supposed that there would be about six persons, but there were many more interested people, and we, having corrected the scenario, increased the number of actors up to twenty five. The youngest participant of the play was seven; the most senior one — seventy nine.

It is difficult to say what caused such an unusual desire of townspeople to participate during all summer and the beginning of autumn in rehearsals that lasted for many hours. Probably, it was because of the topic; maybe, thanks to the talent of the director; or due to the unusual experience of rehearsals on the streets in the town center in front of their fellow countrymen. It is unequivocally possible to say that all this time the town was filled with talks about the unusual event. Possibly, therefore, the performance was attended not only by the actors' friends and relatives and the inhabitants who shared their memories, — there were much more people than we had expected. The whole town came to see this event.

As a conclusion of the performance, there was a flashmob — the inhabitants and actors sang the Ashmiany Waltz that had been restored during the project. This waltz was once loved by the townspeople; it was written by a local composer; a teacher wrote its lyrics in the 1980s, but later it got lost. We managed to find its words and music.

Conclusions

Thus, the preparation of the scenario on the basis of inhabitants' memoirs, the training of amateur actors, and the carrying-out of the pilot performance were aimed at making the local population understand the historical center as a value, at forming "imaginative-figurative" perceptions of the element of heritage in the local population's consciousness.

The project is over; all events/actions have taken place; actual indicators correspond to the pre-planned ones; but actually for us it is this rare project that has surpassed our expectations as for the quality of the happened events.

Yes, we wanted to restore, to update the Ashmiany inhabitants' perceptions of the town and its center and to make together with them a quality play with the help of experts: directors, script writers, and painters. Still, our previous experience told us that the local community usually has complexes about its provinciality and rejects professionals from the capital as something alien and foreign. Also, considering a huge list of formal actions/events, which should be "digested" by our Belarusian regions, we did not hope much to inspire Ashmiany residents at all.

Why has this event taken place? — Probably because each inhabitant of Ashmiany, who participated in our project, "was put on buskins" where he/she became significant and interesting for him/herself and other people.

As a result of the project, we have gathered good techniques that can be reproduced in other places. Sometimes, not only WHAT, but also WHO is very important. We were lucky in Ashmiany as in this town there is a considerable layer of creative intelligentzia. Although these people are substantially separated as they work in different establishments, they are ready to interact. A considerable role was also played by the fact that we had experiences of fruitful teamwork with the local community during our previous projects — the restoration of the Halshany Castle; the creation of the exposition of the Ashmiany Museum; — and for this very reason it was possible to implement what we planned during such a short period of time. Without it, it would be impossible to carry this project out.

At last, the most positive thing is that after the project was over, the contacts that appeared during the performance in the local community have not vanished. Ashmiany residents have already played this performance on a school scene, having adapted the scenario, actors, and the play itself to suit new circumstances.

Also, the local newspaper "Ashmianski Viesnik" continues its column "From Memory Storerooms".

COLOR OF BELARUS: ACTUALIZATION OF THE BELARUSIAN TRADITION AS AN IDENTITY MARKER

“Flying University” Support and Charity Foundation

Location
Minsk, Belarus

Implementation period
April 2016 — May 2017

Project coordinator
Yuliya Halinouskaya

Author
Michal Aniempadystau

Context, Problem, Purpose

During several years, the Flying University has been studying and actualizing the topic of Belarusian traditional esthetic preferences (coloristic and stylistic) in various forms of today’s use (design, architecture, environment, media, and culture), in mass consciousness and taste. The partnership with Michal Aniempadystau, the exclusive expert in this area, designer, artist, author in a broad sense of this word, has resulted in several courses of lectures on design, opened for wide interested audiences. It became obvious at some instant that the received culturological material on traditional visual codes is extremely important in questions of our national identity; besides, except us, nobody deals with this topic openly.

Thus, there appeared an idea to actualize this area of knowledge for a wide cultural community; to show historical canons and styles; the logic of their appearance, synthesis, and development; to offer the necessary bases, tools in the work with the tradition, style-forming elements, and markers characteristic of our culture and mentality. This topic is particularly perspective, we think, for those who can apply this knowledge professionally — designers, artists, architects, cultural managers, brandmakers, and experts in marketing.

As a community of intellectuals, this project helps us to promote not only a rational and solicitous attitude to the chosen material, but also the value of the research itself, the intellectual work to restore the tradition and links with the present.

Project Contents

- The book-catalog “Color of Belarus” is the result of Aniempadystau’s huge work and the central product of the project. This research of the color restores the fundamental bases of Belarus’ coloristics; in the contemporary conditions of postmodernism, with its color, esthetic decisions, it is called to become a stimulus to reconsider the questions of style, esthetics. The author scrupulously restores the lost examples of “cultural similarity”, thus reviving connections in the cultural continuity and stylistic harmony, or, as a matter of fact, creates the tradition anew.

- The book was presented to the public in spring 2017 and was accompanied by a special exhibition with the same name. There were presentations in Minsk and the regional centers of Belarus: Vitsiebsk, Hrodna, and Brest. We are planning to visit other regional cities with our book and exhibition presentations. These events accompanied by open discussions concerning the national style and identity, as we think, promote cultural decentralization needed today in Belarus — they establish connections and relations with representatives of cultural elites and activists in regional cities.

- The lecture course that was read within the framework of the school “Style and Identity” in the beginning of 2017; it is now presented as an independent video course on **dp.fly-uni.org**; it was created thanks to CHOICE within the pale of the organizational development section.

Evaluating our work, we can mention now preliminary results only — the catalog was sold out faster than we had expected; numerous journalistic materials and responses on the Internet, invitations to have autograph sessions in different bookshops in Minsk, inquiries to carry out the exhibition in other cities, and offers to print the book again — all these attest a high degree of society’s interest, probably not so narrowly professional.

The project has given the Flying University a basis for a new, more integral educational program aimed at developing methods of work with cultural and intellectual heritage.

Communication Challenges of the Project

Due to the novelty of the topic, we did not face any serious substantial conflicts. However, we felt no obvious reciprocal movement — although this topic is obviously topical for various target groups — first of all, state-run structures and mass media. At the institutional level, the topic cannot be advanced in state-run universities (we understood it at the stage of advertising

our events). The majority of state-run mass media ignored our invitations to the exhibition opening; single cases of publications about the exhibition in the state-run mass media, as a rule, were possible thanks to personal acquaintances with journalists.

However, the inertness and circumspection of the state sector in relation to any representatives of independent culture in Belarus is an unpleasant, but habitual circumstance. Recently, there has been a wave of so-called “soft Belarusianization”. However, priorities of public attention changed this spring in connection with the aggravation of socio-political tensions. In parallel with the stage of our active advertising campaign of the book presentation in Minsk, there were important cultural-political events: huge protests to protect the Kurapaty memorial complex (the place of mass burial of victims of Stalin repressions), mass detentions of activists on the eve of March 25th (the Independence Day of Belarus, which is not recognized by power), as well as rallies of so-called “social parasites”. All these affected our work with the independent mass media as all attention was concentrated on other topics. In comparison with these force majeur circumstances, our work (important for the strengthening of national identity) in the media would be considered inappropriate and even indecent. It is hardly possible to get prepared for such situations in advance, especially with strict calendar frameworks; however, it was a valuable experience for us who learnt management flexibility and civic tactfulness.

New Partner Connections and Relations

During the work on the book and the exhibition, there was rapprochement of a certain pool of experts and organizations — it gives us hope to continue joint research work on this topic.

We are grateful for cooperation personally to Todar Kashkurevich, Lena Mironava, Volha Labacheuskaya, Elina Schindler, who work with the tradition and similar topics.

Our institutional links and relations with the Belarusian Union of Designers and the public cultural campaign “Budzma [Let’s Be] Belarusians!” have been strengthened. Now there are negotiations with the Union of Designers concerning our interaction with a remote platform — the organization of a number of public lectures and courses. Within the scope of the campaign “Budzma”, there will be new publications on the topic of coloristics, the Belarusian tradition and style, and advancement of the value of the intellectual work with the cultural tradition. The strategic partnership between us can lead to projects combining education, cultural science, sociology, and marketing technologies for culture.

Our links and relations with international partners have increased, too. During his working trips to gather materials, Michal Aniempadystau met the management of the Museum of Textiles in Lodz, the Podlachia Museum in Bialystok, the private museum of Belarusian ethnography in Studziwody (Poland). While preparing the exhibition and the book, collections of museums were used only partially — there is potential to continue this topic. Also, there are plans for the future — to organize an exhibition in Bialystok.

As a whole, we quite actively initiate new partnerships with the mass media, experts, initiatives, and organizations that are also interested in the further advancement of cultural heritage. We are ready to render intellectual, methodological support and to include new topics and experts in our educational program.

THE NODE OF LIFE

“Mahilou Jewish Community” Public Association

Location
Mahilou Region, Belarus

Implementation period
April 2016 — April 2017

Project coordinator
Ida Shenderovich

Context. Problem Solved by the Project

Necropoleis of the 17th-19th centuries are places of historical memory with an exclusive atmosphere and a powerful educational, emotional, and esthetic influence, sources of historical, genealogical, and sociological information. Some gravestones are vivid examples of fine arts and some epitaphs — of poetic creativity; they can become attractive touristic objects. However, meanwhile neither authorities, nor public realize the value of this kind of historical heritage. Ancient cemeteries remain a subject of interest of not numerous and isolated enthusiasts, as well as businessmen and vandals; their vulnerability in the light of today’s Belarusian legislation is only increasing. In the cities of Mahilou, Chavusy, Shklou, and other towns in the Mahilou Region, ancient epigraphic monuments and old constructions are little studied or not studied at all.

Our organization is convinced that ancient epigraphic monuments are not only an important part of historical heritage, but also a resource of cultural, economic, and ethical development of Belarus; this project is aimed at returning them in the focus of public attention, at including them in the actual cultural use.

It was important for us to work with public activists — first of all with youth from towns in the Mahilou Region, who are interested in studying and preserving the history and culture of Belarus, so that they could receive new knowledge, skills, and experience of practical participation in project actions/events. As a result, we managed to build effective interaction of people of different nationalities, representatives of different organizations, cultural communities, and generations not only in the specified cities, but also outside of the country.

Project Contents

We began our project with a joint review of local graveyard monuments in Shklou, Drybin, and Chavusy, the Mahilou Region. We defined the volume and the order of works at Jewish cemeteries and had meetings with representatives of local authorities and the public. In each regional center, there were interested people. In Shklou — participants of a local ethnographic initiative; in Drybin — journalists, students, and senior pupils; in Chavusy — a local organization of the BRSM. In Mahilou — members of the Belarusian Language Association. Members of Jewish organizations were involved as well.

- During the three-day seminar “Value of ancient cemeteries in the context of national culture”, we formed a group of public activists “The Node of Life”. There were lecturers from Mahilou, Minsk, Moscow, Kyiv, and Warsaw; in connection with the budget reduction, some of them agreed to work free-of-charge.

30 people joined the work — mainly youth. Unexpectedly, inhabitants of other cities in Belarus and even

abroad — Germany, Russia, and Ukraine — got interested in this topic. This international structure of participants of the project has increased its scientific level; the mass media and local authorities now demonstrated a more serious attitude towards it. For participants of the seminar, we organized a multicultural program in 6 languages, excursions, and performances of musicians. There were discussions concerning the preservation of epigraphic cultural heritage.

- Online consultations for participants of the project allowed us to expand the geographical frameworks of our activity and to motivate participants. In total, more than 50 people were trained by the involved experts from Belarus, Israel, Russia, and Ukraine.

- The creation of an information base became the third and biggest step. Experts of the project and about 100 volunteers prepared monuments and gravestones to be photographed and translated inscriptions from Hebrew into Russian. Volunteers collected data on monuments from local residents. They also used documentary and archival materials and publications in the mass media.

- On the basis of this database, the project Internet resource **http://mogjewshistory.ru/UZEL** was created. It includes a photo catalogue and descriptions of necropoleis, video films.

- We prepared several printed editions, too. Informational and methodical booklets “The Node of Life” about features of Jewish cemeteries as historical-cultural heritage were given to state-run and school libraries, public organizations, and the authorities of Shklou, Drybin, Chavusy, and Mahilou. Complex structured catalogs of 4 ancient cemeteries (not 3 like it was pre-planned) are on the project web-site.

- Presentations of the project results were in March-April 2017 in the cities-participants of the project. In April 2017, in Mahilou, there was the final round table that discussed the formation of public city memory and its influence on historical consciousness of contemporaries in Mahilou. All these meetings were covered in the mass media; they caused city-folk’s wide interest; we already started to receive responses, messages, and offers of cooperation.

Results of the Project: Expected and Unexpected

Even before the project was over, there were signs that local residents changed their attitude to ancient cemeteries and that they were recognized historical-cultural objects and memory places.

- Before our group arrived, in Chavusy an ancient Jewish cemetery had been cleaned.

- In one of rural schools, annual visiting and cleaning of the Jewish cemetery was included in its program of educational work.

- Participants of the scientifically-practical seminar from Belarus have independently conducted researches of old Jewish cemeteries in Chervien, Smilavichy, Rahachou, and the village of Starasielle of the Shklou District.

- The management of the Shklou Regional Museum initiated the carrying-out of a round table called “Jewish heritage of Shklou: history and reality”. The materials on the Jewish history of Shklou were included in the constant exposition of the Museum.

- Being inspired by the results of cataloguing of the ancient Uspensky cemetery in Mahilou, historians and regional specialists of the city have additionally researched the cemetery and found several valuable tombstones.

- About 20 visitors of the web-site from different countries have expressed their gratitude for they have found in our catalogs mentions of burial places of their relatives.

- Information on the project was in all official news editions of the settlements involved in the project, the local TV, and the nationwide newspaper “Soviet Byelorussia”.

What the Project Gave Us

It has extremely enriched us with positive experience. The organization has received a strong young team of volunteers and activists who are ready to solve new tasks in the field of studying and preserving cultural heritage. We have managed to find mechanisms of collective decision-making and to implement them. The project required close, effective, and constructive partnership with various state structures and foreign experts. The organization had no experience of such a scale before. Using our own positive reputation, communicative, professional, and human resources of volunteers and activists, we have managed to build not just interaction, but in most cases real cooperation with various state structures and to achieve positive results.

We are confident that the created positive atmosphere between the public and state structures will allow us not only to continue our work in the places where it was already conducted, but also to expand it geographically at a higher professional level.

SINGING ASSEMBLY
“SPEUNY SKHOD”
in Belarusian

“Singing Assembly” Initiative, after registration — **“Culture of the Native Land” Cultural Institution**

Location
Belarus

Implementation period
April 2016 — April 2017

Project coordinator
Aliaksey Chubat

Context: How the “Singing Assembly” Project Appeared

Several years ago, the project manager Aliaksey Chubat took part in three ethnographic expeditions. He visited village houses, recorded the conversations with the old people. He drew attention to the fact that despite thousands of authentic songs being recorded they mostly remain in the archives. At the same time, mass art destroys the local traditional song culture of Belarus and threatens its diversity before our very eyes. The majority of young Belarusians do not acknowledge the value of the traditional song culture, which is still alive in Belarus (the phenomenon that many developed Western European countries already cannot boast).

The threat of losing the national song culture amid the generation gap and the influence of globalization seemed to be a huge problem — but not huge enough for us to give up. We risked to introduce our own way to diversify the cultural life of Belarus, attracting and motivating fellow citizens to actively sing folk songs.

Project Implementation

To solve these issues, we worked in several directions. Firstly, we organized major thematic events where people could sing together (100-200 people). Secondly, two regular groups of students (40 people each) for in-depth songs study were formed. Thirdly, within the implementation of the project, we developed and launched “Travelling with the Singing Assembly” — a new cultural and commercial product that allowed us to gain certain stability. Fourthly, we began organizing song courses in addition to the activities of the project. Fifthly, we collaborated with different experts on singing so as to ensure that our field continues to develop after the end of the project.

Probably, it is thanks to high ambitions to become not just a widely known, branded project, but a mass culture phenomenon that we managed to achieve so much. We have made a great contribution to the diversity of the Belarusian cultural life. We organized about twice as many events as what had been planned and not only in the capital — we are known in many cities of the country. We managed to create a positive image of different generations singing together: elderly ladies sing along with the young girls, and both generations need each other. The growing number of our regular participants of younger age speaks for itself. We are particularly pleased with the popularity of meetings with the elderly ladies who are skilled in traditional singing.

The substantial research of the topic before the start of the project implementation became the key factor of our success. By the time we started working within the international project, our initiative has already made a name: the concept was developed, we carried out the negotiations with the partners, and even made a series of events, to which we owe our first audience. There already was a great team thrilled with the project idea and ready to act in a state of constant enthusiasm. Thus, participation in CHOICE has significantly helped the project, which was already gathering pace.

Organization and Partner Network Development

As communication trainings teach it is necessary to talk about the successes and the results of your cultural initiatives as often and as open as possible. So, here we have a lot of reasons for being proud:

- We managed to effectively communicate with government bodies and media, which is not that easy in Belarus, where the state and the

NGOs exist almost like in parallel worlds. The Department of Culture of the Pruzhany District Executive Committee, the Folkloric Center of the Aranchycy village, the National Historical Museum, the Vankovich Museum, the Museum of the RSDLP, the radio of the Minsk Regional Executive Committee "Minsk Wave", the Piatrus Brouka Literary Museum, the Yakub Kolas Museum (Minsk), the "Kultura" newspaper, Grodno Regional Executive Committee — all these state institutions became our partners.

- Apart from the state partners we collaborated with a number of for-profit and non-profit organizations: the branch of "Mova Nanova" in Vitsebsk, such music bands as Shuma, Guda, Uniya, the "Chabatuhi" folklore ethnographic ensemble, the "Pavaliaki" folk ensemble, the "Interkomtur" and "ColorLand" travel agencies, the "Grai" restaurant, the organizing committees of such festivals as "Kamianitsa", "Lepelski Tsmok", "Under the tutelage of St. Hubert", the TUT.by Gallery, the Cultural Center "Gruntounia" (Brest), the "Joy to Children" public association, the Student ethnographic community, the "Vesianchuk" children's studio, the "Lohvinau" Book Store children's workshops. For instance, the travel agencies acted as market entities that can logistically support this type of business, and they were responsible for accepting money. The "Singing Assembly" made an advertising campaign to attract those wishing to go on a trip and involved its regular participants.

- We closely followed the development of the other projects of the CHOICE program in Belarus. The project coordinator interviewed almost all participants of the program from the Belarusian side, which allowed us to see all the projects from the inside and to enrich ourselves with their experience. However, the cooperation with the "Children's Creative Workshops" project, which hold contemporary art workshops for kids was of the utmost interest to us. Firstly, we organised a "Children's Singing Assembly" project together. Secondly and most importantly, within this partnership we managed to express the concept that "modern art comes from the traditional art" and we successfully conveyed it to the participants of this cultural event. The connection between the traditional and contemporary art is not always easy to trace, that's why such a concept seemed relevant.

The name of the project became a common name. The "Singing Assembly" is living its own life now: for example, Lyuban and Lyubanski District organised their own "Singing Assembly" meetings, though its was not a part of the project. Now every Wednesday an authentic folklore band from a certain village comes to the city itself and all guests sing songs of a particular region together.

We believe that we have created a local (Belarusian) precedent of innovative work in the field of cultural diversity of intangible heritage. We have made the singing of traditional folk songs together fashionable. The demand for such events has grown: singing together or, as people call it, the "Singing Assembly" has become one of the program items during festivals and other cultural events in the country. We are receiving requests to organize such events from the state cultural institutions as well.

On the way to the aforementioned results our team survived a major crisis. When the informal civil initiative was in the process of legalization to form a non-profit organization — the "Culture of the Native Land" institution, a different vision of the further development strategy of the "Singing Assembly" between the two authors of the idea got exposed. The conflict at that stage proved to be insoluble for us individually, and as a result one team split into two, working separately in the related field. However, as paradoxical as it may sound, the "Singing Assembly" format proved to be stronger than human disagreements: new volunteers and people who share our values joined the team. The initiative gathered a close circle of friends — people for whom the "Singing Assembly" becomes an indispensable place of social activity.

What's next? The project team plans (and has already started the work in some cases) to pursue development in the following areas:

- further work with the intangible culture by means of creating a School of Living Heritage;

- development of the topic of culture and economy synergy;

- spreading the knowledge about the intangible heritage of Belarus, finding new approaches and ways of working with intangible heritage;

- creating the environment for the formation of new cultural products (for example, making hackathons for the acceleration of projects in the field of culture).

BELARUSIAN ART OF THE 20TH CENTURY FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS

Children's Creative Workshops of the U Contemporary Art Gallery; after registration — **"Embassy of Culture" Cultural Institution**

Location
Minsk, Belarus

Implementation period
April 2016 — April 2017

Project coordinators
Sofia Sadouskaya, Iryna Lukashenka

Context. Problem Solved by the Project

Today, Belarusian pupils practically have no chances to get acquainted with contemporary art in a form they are able to understand — school hours to study world and Belarusian art culture are minimized; there are no clear and interesting educational programs; museums do not use innovative approaches to attract target groups. The state basically supports traditional, realistic, and "convenient" art. Alternative and contemporary art are not known, not remembered, and not understood.

Our overall aim was to promote and popularize the Belarusian art of the 20th century as an important part of Belarusian culture and identity. The project team wanted not only to create a possibility of involving children and parents in the process of perceiving contemporary art, but also to designate the problem — practically the total absence of books and programs for children on the Belarusian art of the 20th century, which form new generations' culture of thinking and perception of contemporary art.

Families (children and parents) interested in Belarusian culture, museum employees, teachers, interested NGOs, educational institutions, and society as a whole were target groups of the project. The basic beneficiaries of the project are children and youth who have learned more about Belarusian art and become active visitors of exhibitions, who are able to perceive contemporary art as a part of the cultural landscape of Belarus.

Project Contents

The main product of the project is the book "Art of Belarus of the 20th century for children. Vitsiebsk School". It is the first book of such a kind for children in Belarus. It was created by: poet, artist, businessman Adam Hlobus; writer Andrei Khadanovich; musician and artist Lavon Volski; philosopher Valiantsin Akudovich; historian and art critic Anna Kislitsyna, as well as Uladzimir Tsesler, Ruslan Vashkevich, Aliaxey Andreyeu, and Tatsiana Artsimovich.

Our financial resources were limited and we had to include only seven names of artists in the book, concentrating on the Vitsiebsk School and its evolutionary message for the history of arts, which is still topical now. We also included names of the Vitsiebsk School followers who worked throughout the 20th century.

The book-textbook is written not only in the Belarusian language, but also in the "children's" one — in the form of fairy tales, poems, biographic stories, and interactive games.

In parallel with the preparation of the edition, we carried out a series of classes for a group of children. As a result, there appeared a program of interactive classes for children on the art of Belarus of the 20th century and a corresponding methodical manual that allows us to popularize Belarusian art in informal education and to multiply our pedagogical experience. Besides, there were seminars on this technique for teachers and tutors in Homiel, Vitsiebsk, and Lyntupy (in May-June 2017).

Public Relations

The need of additional resources also forced us to resort to a crowdfunding campaign in order to print the book. It was organized on the platform ulej.by and it lasted for two months; it became a basis of our PR strategy. Thanks to this public fund raising, we solved the financial problem and generated a very loyal audience that waited for the appearance of the book. We had 300 in-advance orders (unique users), more than 500 subscribers on social networks during this period, which gave us a big share of self-trust in what we do.

It is extremely important to have an integrated approach to advertising actions — therefore, during the preparation of the book, there was a number of supporting actions/events — the most important one was the annual Christmas festival. Its topic this year was dedicated to M. Chagall's paintings and its program included master classes. The festival was supported by the Belarusian People's Bank. The Vitsiebsk-based factory of children's clothes “Bell Bimbo” became one of sponsors of the book during the fund raising campaign.

The book presentation became a resonant event, which is proved by a considerable number of the followed publications. Of course, the event itself is not so important — it is important that we have offered a media precedent, an occasion for discussions on what such books should be, how they should be written, and what artists should be presented. There is again a question of the problem of the quality and quantity of children's educational literature in Belarus and the problems of school education and the way culture is included in school courses.

The sphere of informal education (NGOs sector) is still the most flexible and innovative — that is why it is effective in the context of today's challenges, which is proved by the increase of a number of art-educational initiatives (circles, classes in museums and art centers, studios, and clubs). We have become one of leaders of the new approach to contemporary art education, created an alternative textbook, an example for museums, studios, and schools. Readers' further reaction to the book and the methodical manual, their popularity and inclusion in everyday life will make the purpose achievement indicators more palpable; however, we are already happy with the implemented work.

Development of the Project and the Organization, New Partnerships

Now we are preparing the following project — a book on Kazimir Malevich, supported by the Malevich Foundation (USA). This time, we hope to receive consultations and support from the cultural community of Vitsiebsk. Also, we plan not only to work on books, but also to multiply our experience of classes on Belarusian art.

Thanks to the organizational support of the CHOICE project, the initiative “Children's Creative Workshops” of the U Gallery has become a separate organization — the socio-cultural establishment “Embassy Of Culture”. It was a certain challenge for the team — however, this step was necessary after we defined our strategy of development. Now we work on activity expansion, including, inter alia, new age target groups. One of the nearest educational projects will be aimed at working with teenagers and students.

In the course of the implementation of the project, we became experienced in the publishing activity; began to cooperate with the Lohvinau Literary House, the international consortium EuroBelarus, the crowdfunding platform Ulej, the “Singing Gathering”, and became more recognized and integrated in the cultural community of Minsk as a whole.

The work on the book became an excellent occasion to start our partnership with the project “Culture for local development” organized by A. Mickiewicz Institute and European Solidarity Center (Poland), as well as to participate in the EU program “Culture and Creativity”. For each member of the team, all these became not only useful experiences, but also a precondition for further personal and professional development.

Aspiring to changes, we, meanwhile, protect our main values — historical empathy and pride of our cultural heritage, comprehension of our belonging to Belarusian history and culture, as well as the vision of prospects of development in local and global narratives.

SHKOLISHCHA (PAKROUSKI PASAD) AS PART OF THE HISTORICAL-CULTURAL VALUE “HISTORICAL CENTER OF MAHILOU”

The Belarusian Voluntary Association to Protect Historical-Cultural Monuments

Location
Mahilou, Belarus

Implementation period
April 2016 — October 2016

Project coordinator
Anton Astapovich

Context. The Problem Solved by the Project

Pakrouski Pasad (Shkolishcha) is a unique ancient territory in the city context of Mahilou, the eastern regional center of Belarus. Today, this former economic heart of the city is deserted — almost 90% of its historical buildings, layout structure, and basic dominants is destroyed: St. Anthony Church, Bernardians’ monastery, Pakrouskaya [Intercession of the Theotokos; Pokrov] Church, and the synagogue. There are only several water fences left, but they do not work now.

Formally, Shkolishcha is part of the immovable material historical-cultural heritage called “The Historical Center of Mahilou”, but actually — it is not involved in the city’s social, cultural, and economic processes. Its regeneration is possible only if city-folk become interested in this territory. Meanwhile, our important achievement prior to the project was that we had managed to get the city’s executive power interested in it. Thanks to the adjusted labor relations between our association and the Mahilou City Executive Committee, by 2015, we had received all possibilities to regenerate the Shkolishcha cultural landscape with joint efforts of the public and the state, thus involving more and more the local community in the work aimed at protecting and popularizing the historical-cultural heritage.

Such possibilities, quite rare for Belarus, could not be missed; therefore, we decided to strengthen as much as possible the platform of further dialogue. It was necessary to draw townspeople’s attention — first of all, that of the professional community: historians and regional specialists, architects, and the main thing — representatives of business, who could provide new functional contents of this territory. In order to create a platform of public-state dialogue and partnership on this question, we were to work out scientific-research substantiations and a concept of regenerating and interpreting the tourist sphere of Shkolishcha.

Project Contents

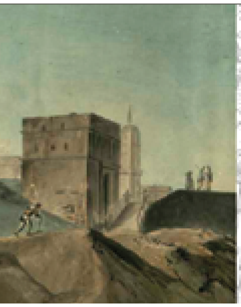
The campaign of popularizing the Shkolishcha concept was carried out in several stages. In order to achieve our goal, we had several steps.

- We prepared theoretical and graphic substantiations of a technical project of the concept of regenerating the territory of Shkolishcha in Mahilou. It was a necessary start.

- Having made expositional tablets and the corresponding project albums of archival-bibliographic researches and graphic materials, we put them in the Mahilou City Executive Committee and in the city exhibition hall. At the end of May 2016, we officially presented the concept to 70 architects, historians, activists, businessmen, and journalists.

- Later, there were 4 public meetings — concept discussions in target groups: with the architectural community, business circles, real estate developers and representatives of the local administration. Their major result was an initiative to create a charitable local foundation to manage the cultural landscape of Shkolishcha. Then, a charter project was developed, and in February 2017 we received the physical and legal address in one of historical-architectural monuments of Mahilou.

- The concept offered by us was actively discussed in the city’s mass media, including television. Thus, the TV-channel BT-4 demonstrated a 25-minute documentary film in the series “Familiar Strangers” dedicated to the project.



- There was a number of sessions with those responsible from the Mahilou City Executive Committee and experts from the state Institute “Mahilougrazhdanproject” where the prepared materials were discussed.

Challenges and Possibilities

We also participated in the preparation of the city’s architectural concept of Mahilou (Project of detailed planning of the central part of Mahilou, the General Layout of Mahilou, and the concept of architectural development of Mahilou). The materials worked out by our team became an organic part of this concept, which was later approved by the Chairperson of the Council of the National Assembly of Belarus and by the President of Belarus. Civil society demonstrated its interest not only in the problems of Shkolishcha, but also problems of perspective development of the territory of Padnikolle Suburb that includes Shkolishcha.

During the implementation of the project, we revealed and fixed infringements of the legislation in the field of heritage protection while working on a separate object of historical-cultural heritage (the synagogue, the Jewish school). The conflict threatened to break our cooperation with the City Executive Committee as the authorities supported the primary contractor; however, after long negotiations, we managed to develop a mechanism of teamwork with the Ministry of Culture to control the legislation execution on objects of restoration and reconstruction.

Conclusions

The materials developed by us and the work with the local authorities and the professional architectural community have made it possible to place Shkolishcha in the General Layout of Mahilou as a territory of perspective regeneration of historical buildings. A special document, unprecedented in the history of contemporary Belarusian town-planning, was worked out — the project of special planning of the territory of Padnikolle and Shkolishcha.

As a whole, the real estate developers and business community are interested in perspective investments in objects of regeneration on this territory; however, it is impossible to ignore the current economic crisis in the country, which resulted in the sharp narrowing of the real estate market and the architectural-building sphere.

An important sign of the successfulness of the project is that our ideas in the developed materials are being continued now by the local authorities and civil society’s participation in this process is not denied, but even welcomed.

Our Organizational Potential and Partnerships

The project has given us a huge share of experience and confidence. The Belarusian voluntary association to protect historical-cultural monuments has become the most authoritative organization in Mahilou and the Mahilou Region in the field of protecting historical-cultural heritage. The project was an excellent stimulus for a professional growth of our employees — researchers, designers, and experts in communication.

For example, besides the already habitual kinds of work: scientific-research, design, legal, — we had to work actively not so much with “the wide public”, but rather many different concrete target groups (power, business, architectural and academic communities). This focusing of attention, especially in case with representatives of business, has helped us understand partially their motivations and attitudes to historical-cultural monuments.

The big public interest in a number of volunteering projects prepared by our organization in Mahilou and the Region attests the increased volunteering potential.

3. Набярэжная - музей рачнога транспарту

We are grateful to our partners in Mahilou. Our key partner — the Museum of History of Mahilou — provided us with its showrooms for a long-term exposition and presentations. The Department of Architecture and Building of the Mahilou City Executive Committee acted as a bridge between our association, the City Executive Committee, the Institute “Mahilougrazhdanproject”, and Belarusian State Scientific-Research and Project Institute of Town-planning.

Owing to regular club meetings, we have received closer connections with Belarusian participants of the CHOICE program, including even those who did not get in the final contest. Also, we were extremely glad to build new contacts with profile organizations in Ukraine, among which: the Tustan Museum, the Ukrainian Modernism Institute in Rivne, the Kremenets Environmental League, the Lviv regional organization of the Ukrainian Society to protect monuments of history and culture, the Lviv regional saving archaeological service, and the Chair of Stone Restoration of the Lviv Polytechnic University.

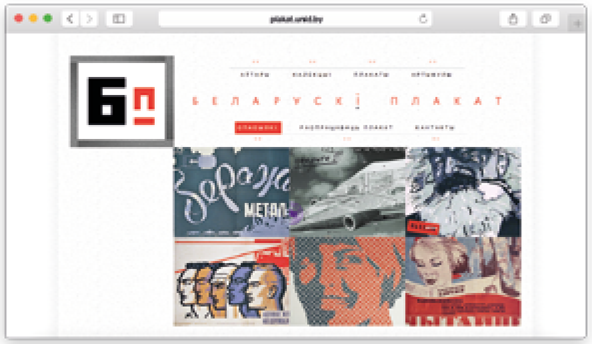
BELARUSIAN POSTER

“The Belarusian Union of Designers” Public Association

Location
Minsk, Belarus

Implementation period
April 2016 — May 2017

Project coordinator
Dzmitry Surski



Context. Problem Solved by the Project

The project topic is chosen not casually, of course. The poster is a special art genre, frequently a work of art, and a documentary and visual marker of its time. The Belarusian poster has world recognition — there are numerous, but private examples: more than 100 posters have received awards at prestigious international competitions; more than 300 copies are in the best collections of the world. The greatest peak of the popularity of the Belarusian poster is the recent times — since Perestroika till the present day. Still, as a phenomenon, the national school of this special genre of the art and socio-political statement is not present either in the mass media, or in educational environment. It is because the information on our poster artists’ works is scattered and segmental.

Concrete names and historical landmarks of Belarusian poster development deserve much more attention, systemization, and representation. We have tried to fill this lack of attention. Thus, the project reveals the full history of the Belarusian poster: from the origin of the press and typographical art in Belarus in the early 16th century, the first playbills — to not published before posters of the Belarusian artists Y. Drazdovich, F. Rushchyts, H. Zmudzinski, A. Kashkurevich, H. Paplauski, and B. Zaborau — up to the well-known in the world modern Belarusian poster artists L. Gor, E. Kitayeva, U. Tsesler, and A. Shelyutto. Also, we revived the interest in UNOVIS as a world phenomenon, which took place in our history, and opened the names of artists of the 1910s-1930s, little-known or forgotten not only in the world, but also in the Belarusians’ mass consciousness.

The project underlines Belarus’ multiculturalism — poster art has been influenced by Polish, Russian, Jewish, and other cultures. The poster fixes the history of daily life and its visual culture, significant events in society’s life.

Project Contents

Being guided by the principles of universality and multi-instrumentalism, we worked on three basic products: the digital archive, the web-site, and the book, — as well as exhibitions in Minsk and regional cities. All these tools are interconnected and work for the overall aim. The digital archive and the collection of posters have their own value already now and in the future they can become a base for a museum of the Belarusian poster, new publications and thematic exhibitions.

- The digital archive, i.e. a hard disk and a cloud (Google disk), includes about 2,500 works created by more than 350 authors (about 300 posters have no authorship).

We have collected the greatest possible volume of the data concerning the Belarusian poster. Our own collection, collections of establishments in Belarus and abroad, private collections, and the Internet were our sources. The Hrodna Historical, National Historical, and Baranavichy Regional Museums, the World War II Museum, the P. Brouka Literary Museum, the Belarusian Statehood Museum, the National Library of Belarus, and the Book Chamber of Belarus presented digital copies. The web-site plakat.ru presented one poster created in Hrodna in the 19th century. We received posters from members of our union, authors of posters, and tutors. In the Russian State Library, we managed to receive pre-war posters published on the territory of Belarus: posters from Hrodna made during World War I, posters by A. Bykhouski (Homiel), and H. Zmudzinski's poster. There is a preliminary agreement to receive a digital copy of F. Rushchyts's poster of 1913 — the first poster in the Belarusian language.

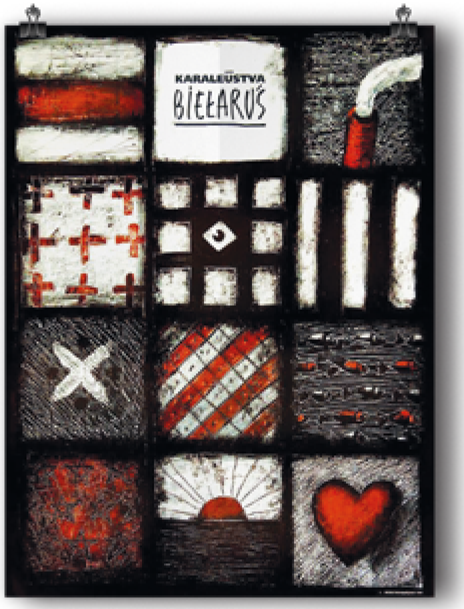
- The web-site of posters plakat.unid.by is created on the basis of the digital archive; its contents are constantly growing. It has the categories “Author”, “Title”, and “Year”. We have our own thematic classification — three basic kinds of posters: social, cultural, and commercial. As for the artistic touch, posters are: font, illustrative/figurative, and formal/abstract. The following kinds of techniques are used: graphics, paintings, photos, collage, and computer graphics. There are relief printing, lithography, offset, silk-screen printing, and digital printing. Styles search is provided. There are also tags describing visual and semantic contents of posters. The web-site has thematic articles, too.

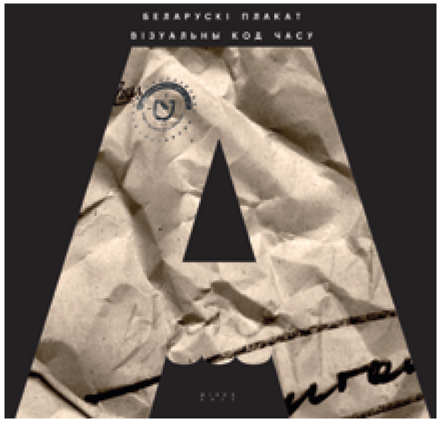
- The book-album reveals the basic, most prominent aspects of the Belarusian poster that have to do with its formation and further development, technologies and ways of creation. In the book, we refused a catalog presentation in a strictly chronological order or by authors as this information is on the web-site. First of all, we wanted to show the social, historical-cultural, and technological context of the appearance and functioning of this genre and its transformation in an independent art form. It was important for us to present the brightest representatives of the Belarusian poster school. Thus, autobiographical essays, interviews, and memoirs reveal a secret part of the process of creating posters, which often remains behind the frameworks of dry art criticism researches.

- Exhibitions in Minsk and regions are a powerful tool of public dialogue, popularization of the historical heritage of the poster. The unique poster collection of the Belarusian Union of Designers allows us to form various thematic collections to be exhibited in the future. Also, we have printed several rare posters, which originals are outside of Belarus. We have had exhibitions in regional centers, which became a stimulus for the development of local art platforms and communication of local communities. The exhibitions have received a resonance both in the state-run and independent mass media.

Conclusions

The Belarusian poster is an open project and its completion within the scope of CHOICE does not mean its purpose is achieved — the collection, the digital archive, and the web-site will keep growing. All project activities are aimed at motivating the public and professional interest in this genre. The web-site became an excellent resource for art criticism work, creation of new posters, a tool of interaction of authors and potential customers, and a platform of fast reactions to important social phenomena. The site is universal; the general public, professionals, and potential clients (official bodies, theaters) are interested in it. It has made the project alive and dynamic because today it is the unique platform for poster artists, a source of information for the mass media and researchers.





All these help to preserve and revive poster art, to prepare the public for the idea of creating the Belarusian Poster Museum; it strengthens the image of the Belarusian poster as a special phenomenon abroad. We are proud of our contribution to these processes; however, we realize that all of them require time to turn into more significant and appreciable events.

Throughout 20 years the Belarusian Union of Designers has been rather an important and recognized subject of the cultural policy — it has helped our activity during the project, rather than being its result. At the same time, the authority of the organization has increased thanks to this topic. We have confirmed our status of a competent organization and our professional community has become more consolidated: many graphic designers and artists have joined the work on the archive and the web-site as authors; designers-teachers have shared their students' works in the field of the poster.

PROJECT STORIES: MOLDOVA

TRAJAN'S WALL — THE CULTURAL RESOURCE FOR SUSTAINABLE CROSS-BORDER DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION

“Sustainable Development of Cahul” Foundation of the Association

Location
Cahul District, Moldova

Implementation period
May 2016 — April 2017

Project coordinator
Anatolie Nebunu

CAHUL
Valurile lui Traian

Context. Problem. Purposes

The Trajan’s Wall is a system of fortifications built during the epoch of Ancient Rome in Moldova, Ukraine, and Romania. The Lower Trajan's Wall begins in the village of Vadul lui Isac, the Cahul District, Moldova, and reaches Lake Sasyk, the Tatarbunary Distirct, the Odessa Region, Ukraine. Nowadays, this unique monument of history and culture is in a critical condition, being destroyed by time and natural factors.

In spite of the fact that in both Moldova and Ukraine there is a significant number of establishments which responsibility is to protect cultural heritage, as a whole the heritage of southern Moldova and the Odessa Region of Ukraine is not known in a due measure and is not evaluated by local communities. When there is no effective management per se, the potential of using historical-cultural monuments remains just a potential. Poor quality of management is inherent in institutions of both central and local levels. There are practically no examples of cooperation between ministries, local authorities, and civil society, which, if we look at it from a pro-active position, looks like a huge zone for development in the field of cross-border cooperation in cultural heritage questions.

In order to solve this problem, we suggest raising awareness of experts, who work in the sphere of heritage and adjacent sectors, on topical practices, policies, and tools of managing cultural heritage objects and landscapes in protected areas. Working to increase the number of “points of tangency” in cross-border partnership between Moldova and Ukraine, we tried to develop in the long run an innovative and sustainable infrastructure of historical-cultural heritage as a factor of a regional economic growth. In its turn, it presupposes the development of local communities, their engagement and participation in cultural tourism — a direct stimulus of improving the quality of life.

Besides the work with the basic problem, we also paid attention to the solution of some other tasks — to study, to preserve the Trajan’s Wall, and to popularize its cultural value. Joint efforts of our organization and our Ukrainian partners allowed us to initiate a number of actions/events that will directly promote a better understanding of the importance and protection of the Trajan’s Wall.

Contents and Results of the Project

To improve our knowledge of the Roman ancient defense perimeters, a group of experts conducted noninvasive researches with the help of contemporary geophysical and topographical techniques. As a result, we have collected valid data and mapped the Trajan’s Wall in two aspects — the current condition of these ancient defense lines and their integrity as historical-cultural heritage.

One of the basic events within the framework of the project was a seminar with 70 representatives of the local administration, business circles, local and national mass media, cultural and educational institutions of the Cahul District, representatives of Ukraine and Romania. The seminar consisted of two substantial parts. During the first one, the public was presented several exclusively interesting materials on historical and archaeological questions of the Roman defense perimeters on the territory of Moldova, Ukraine, and Romania. The second part of this international meeting was dedicated to questions of developing a regional strategy and launched the creation of a corresponding document.

As a result, we have developed and proposed a strategy to activate the local economic development of the Cahul District on the basis of the resource of the historical-cultural heritage of the Trajan’s Wall.

In order to keep regularly exchanging scientific information and to popularize the cultural-historical value of the Trajan’s Wall on the territory of Moldova and Ukraine, we developed a web platform of the project on the basis of the web-site of our organization **www.fundatiacahul.md**.

And at last, in order to popularize the object, our technical team has developed and created an interactive 3D-model of the Trajan’s Wall. The innovative app will promote the increase of a number of visitors (tourists) of this cultural sight; however, the basic work on its advancement is still ahead.

This small one-year project conduced to the strengthening of cultural sectors of Moldova and Ukraine thanks to the preservation of the common cultural property, organized by common efforts. As a result of the project, there appeared a network of sharing experiences and advanced practices of managing cultural heritage so that it could be integrated in economic development plans of these territories.

New Valuable Partnerships

Our basic partners we would like to express our deep gratitude were: the Cahul Regional Council, Moldova, and the public organization “Agency of sustainable development and European integration “Lower Danube Euroregion” from the Odessa Region, Ukraine. An important part of the working process was our continuous connection with local authorities in the form of both official and informal working meetings with representatives of the Cahul Regional Council, the local business community (20 companies), and the Ukrainian partner organization. Such partner relations are an example of the necessary basis for a sustainable social-economic growth of our region. We already plan the future joint and more ambitious projects as this cooperation has to be continued.

Besides the mentioned organizations, new active members of the local cultural community and adherents joined the process of the project implementation. We created partner relations with the local state administration at the national, regional, and local levels (including 12 village councils), Cahul State University, the Cahul National Theater, the Cahul Museum, local television and radio, local public organizations, the National Archaeological Agency, the Cahul branch of the Commercial and Industrial Chamber of the Republic of Moldova, the National Committee of ICOM-Moldova, the Cultural Policy Center, Izmail State University (Ukraine), and from Romania — the Galati Municipality, the “Paul Paltanea” History Museum from Galati, the History Museum in Braila , and Babes-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca.

What the Project Has Given Us

The foundation of the association “Sustainable Development of Cahul” is gradually becoming one of the main centers of carrying out local and regional educational, research, and cultural-entertaining actions/events. Our good dialogue with the local population and the regional government has allowed us to raise the role of the foundation in the popularization of the value of the cultural heritage of the region and the influence of the organization in decision-making in the cultural sphere.

Our team has become stronger in project management, strategic planning, and marketing thinking. The foundation’s next activity will be aimed at implementing the strategy of capitalizing the Trajan’s Wall as a sign of the ancient empire and ancient art. We have all internal resources for cross-border cooperation and communication in this field with the local population, partner organizations, and authorities. The planned new set of actions consists in closer work with youth and pupils who have participated in the current project.

MUSEUM — SPACE FOR THE COMMUNITY AND CROSS-CULTURAL DIALOGUE

“Honor, dignity and the native land” (ODIP) Public Association

Location
village Văsieni, Ialoveni District, Moldova

Implementation period
April 2016 — March 2017

Project coordinator
Corina Bezer

Context, Problem, Purpose

Moldova, as well as many other countries of our region, is characterized by a situation when cultural life in the countryside depends on the activity of a local “House of Culture” (recreation center) and/or another cultural establishment, which, as a rule, has difficult times as it has to compete with rural household troubles. If the function of such a center of attraction is given to a museum, the situation usually gets aggravated because all museums are associated with the severity and reverential silence before the past. A rural museum especially risks becoming boring and unattractive as its expositions seldom change and it frequently has problems with financing.

However, the History and Ethnography Museum “Anatol Candu” in the village of Văsieni, the Ialoveni District, is urged to become such a center of attraction. In order to destroy the negative stereotypes and to make local cultural life active, we developed a project that combines directions important for the local community: 1) culture, art, and tradition; 2) cultural diversity, and 3) civic participation. In other words, we tried to create here a space for dialogue, which would actively and constantly include the local community in the organization of cultural actions/events aimed at preserving and interpreting cultural heritage, festivals, flashmobs, thematic meetings, etc. We wanted to show that a museum can become a platform for many different types of cultural events and that presentations of folk customs and traditions, as well as the preservation of folk crafts, can be not boring topics!

Although the participation of inhabitants of all age groups is important to us, we paid special attention to the work with children and youth. First, here the traditional educational function is important; second, with the help of children we indirectly involve their families, too.

Project Contents

The creation of a children's creative center in one of halls of the museum became the central part of the project. A bit later we bought Romanian and Moldavian books for it. The creative center will be a place for future actions/events such as interactive games for children, trainings, master classes, public lectures, etc. During the project, we have carried out a number of actions/events here:

- Meeting for children under 15 y.o. about Easter traditions and customs;
- Flashmob on the Day of Europe (May 9th) to inform local residents on European values;
- World day of protection of children; a specially invited theater presented its theatrical performance;
- International seminar “on December, 1st: history yesterday and today” with participation of an international expert from Romania;
- St. Andrew's traditional holiday and many other things.

The seminar “Norms of preservation and revitalization of movable cultural heritage” for 20 experts of museum affairs from all over the Republic was especially important for the project.

The 9th national festival “La Poalele Ţiglei” (“The Root of the Hill”) in August 2016 became the culmination event of the project. The festival main objective was the revival of ancient traditions of our nation. Thanks to good advertising and attention of the mass media, this event gathered in the court yard of the museum about a thousand people — it was much more than in previous years. Representatives of all age categories were participants of the festival — from five-year-old kids to eighty-year-old people. The festival status was raised by the participation of well-known people — representatives of the Ministry of Culture, the Department of Culture of the Ialoveni District, and the regional administration.

In total, our activity within the project has touched more than 5,000 people.

Its basic beneficiaries — inhabitants of not only the village of Văsieni, but also the neighboring villages — are participants of single actions and the constant activity of the creative center for children and youth, festivals and seminars. For a rural museum, it is a real success — the museum has become a bridge for people's interaction, a place where inhabitants come to more often than two times a year to see an exhibition.

Important Partnerships

It would be impossible to implement everything we planned on the basis of the regional museum of history and ethnography "Anatol Candu" without the cooperation with the collective of the museum itself and the authorities — the regional and local councils. The project was supported much by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Moldova, which was our basic partner. Besides the necessary co-financing, leading experts of the Ministry rendered their regular advisory help throughout the whole period of the project implementation. The Minister of Culture of Moldova Monica Babuc was personally present at the opening of the project and underlined the great importance of the project "Museum — space for the community and cross-cultural dialogue" for the development of the local community of the village of Văsieni and, as a whole, marked the importance of the implementation of the European program CHOICE for the Republic of Moldova.

An invaluable contribution was also made by a team of volunteers from inhabitants of the village, who supported us at each stage. We would like to thank the people who performed administrative roles, doers, handicraftsmen, and drivers. We planned an extensive program of performances of national collectives, and when some invited actors suddenly changed their minds, it was necessary to find replacement urgently. Colleagues from the museum "Anatol Candu" and the local administration helped us in it. The expansion of a partner network helped us much as it allowed us to find the best candidates to perform concrete functions.

We also understood how important it is for local projects to invite external experts, especially if they are people with a high professional and/or official status or foreign professionals. During the project, we managed to build cooperation with several such experts, which gives us hope to jointly implement other projects in the future. The international seminar acquainted us with a great historian from Romania, who helped us see and evaluate the originality of the cultural environment created here.

Value of the Project for Us

The project has given us and the people whom we worked with an evident inspiring example of a growth of a spark of an idea in a big and harmonious cultural-educational activity able to considerably enliven the rural humdrum. Our community has felt that it has its bright and beautiful paints in the general cultural picture of Moldova. Provinciality can be a weak spot in people's consciousness only if they themselves believe in it. If they believe in something else — then absolutely other processes are started. In particular, it is important for the heritage sphere as our society has already got used to see the village as a place of traditional national culture.

We have understood the importance of thoughtful project management and regular meetings to plan what has to be done and to evaluate what has been done. They help to maintain the right rate of work and very strongly influence the motivation of involved people.

Having received people's trust, we already have no right to stop the started work. Fortunately, we have new ambitious ideas and will search for any possibilities, at least, to support the cultural activity at the current level.

Spicuşor
s. Văsieni

HISTORY REVIVAL — INTEGRATION OF DURUITOAREA CAVE IN EUROPEAN TOURIST SPACE

“Mostenitorii” Public Organization for Children and Youth

Location
Costesti, Riscani District, Moldova

Implementation period
April 2016 — April 2017

Project coordinator
Nikolae Moscalu

Context: Problem Solved by the Project

The monument of natural and historical heritage of the Stone Age “Duruitoarea Veche” is located on the territory of the Riscani District in a picturesque zone on the bank of the largest Costesti water impoundment in Moldova. This area has an important historical-cultural value and huge tourist potential, which remains unrevealed today. Even today it is possible to find remains of ancient animals in this zone. In 2008, remains of a mammoth were found, and in 2016 here, during an expedition of a summer school organized within the framework of this project, elements of bones of cave bears and horses, which age can exceed 200,000 — 300,000 years, were found.

The project main objective is the preservation and a new, actual interpretation of “Duruitoarea Veche” as an object of natural and historical heritage with the unique archaeological value, with participation of the local community. All these are the necessary condition for the further inclusion of this natural and historical resource in the European tourist space. In long-term prospect, here it is planned to create a full-fledged attractive tourist complex that will include a museum, the cave, the canyon of more than 400 meters long, and the 1,000-meter coral reef.

The preservation and valorization of the cultural heritage of the Republic of Moldova and the inclusion of monuments of the Republic of Moldova in the European tourist network is one of the purposes supported by the European Union.

Project Contents

Thanks to the presence of several involved partners (the key ones are thelocal council of the Riscani District and the council of the village of Costesti), in one big working team, we worked at once on several steps and directions:

- Administrative: the formation of a representative organizing committee;

- Scientific: noninvasive researches together with invited experts from Romania;

- Communities involvement: the organization of summer schools for three different groups of citizens;

- Infrastructure creation: the cleaning and preservation of the object of cultural-natural heritage with participation of members of the community; access improvement; designing and installation of indicators for pedestrians and three advertising boards;

- Presentation and popularization: the opening of a constant exposition in the local museum;

Thanks to this project, this archaeological object gradually becomes known not only among the local population, but also outside of the country. During the project implementation, the TV channels in Moldova made six reports; numerous materials were printed in the national press and on the Internet. Thanks to the project, the strengthening and development of this zone became a priority task of the Tourism Development Plan of the Riscani regional council and the regional development agency. The Prime Minister of Moldova Pavel Filip, who visited Riscani on January, 30th, 2017, marked the necessity to keep developing this territory and promoting tourism in this region, including on the basis of the resources of the natural and cultural heritage of the Riscani District.

Summarizing the general experience of the carried out work, we can share several checked-up factors of successful implementation of the project:

- The analysis and correct definition of strengths and potentials of the monument and its active advancement at the level of the District and the Republic. At the national exhibition “Touristic Moldova” in 2016, the first place was won by the stand of the District dedicated to our object.

- The received experience of cooperation of our public organization with the inhabitants of the village of Duruitoarea Veche. During the previous 4 years, with the assistance of the GIZ foundation (Germany), we participated in the building of the system of water supply and water drain, which allowed us to solve one of the basic problems of the population.

- Transparency of the activity of the organization is a key to be trusted and supported by the public. Besides, we constantly informed the inhabitants of the village: on the importance of the cave as a cultural heritage monument (the majority of the local population did not know it); on the tasks and actions/events that were done and will be done; on possibilities of developing the village and improving the well-being of the population, which will be a consequence of the development of the tourist sector.

At present, we plan to implement new long-term objectives, namely:

- Further development of the museum complex;

- Building of reliable partnerships, interaction and support of the project by usual citizens, the regional authorities, economic agents, and scientific circles of Moldova;

- At the initiative of the regional department of education, teachers of various schools prepare educational materials for additional courses in local educational institutions for 3-9 grades.

Results and Effects

During the project, the initiative and activity of the local population became considerably more active as they received a hope of further positive changes in the District. At the initiative of a group of citizens, the coat of arms and the flag of the village were developed and approved. Thanks to local residents the tourist route with signboards and information displays has been developed. For the last 2 years, 16-20 old houses were purchased in the village and turned into touristic objects, which attests an increased interest of economic agents in the further development of this zone. A group of local activists develops a project of a water club on the basis of the Costesti water impoundment which total area is 220 km^2 and coastal line is more than 6 km.

It is possible to consider it a success that we attracted representatives of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, with whom we had not connections earlier. We have agreed with the Education Department to continue our cooperation in the field of education and patriotism upbringing among the local population.

We have also built partner relations with colleagues from Romania: we signed cooperation agreements with the local historical museum in Botosani and the non-governmental organization “CarPates”, with which in the summer of 2017 we defined and developed joint tourist routes.

Project Continuation Prospects

Complexul muzeistic Duruitoarea Veche

The village of Costesti is situated on the bank of the water impoundment with the same name where in summer, despite the absence of conditions, there are 5-6 thousand tourists. The development of a full-fledged environment-friendly infrastructure, including a museum complex, will make this place more attractive for tourists. Thus, it is already planned to create an information point for tourists — the increase of a number of workplaces will improve the well-being of the local population.

In Moldova, there are lots of natural and archaeological monuments officially recognized as cultural heritage of the Republic and Europe, but they dilapidate quickly. This project can be an example of their revival, a change of citizens’ attitude to them, and their further use to advance national culture. Economic sustainability is a strong argument for the community — it is only necessary to use it right.

It is planned to keep working out the project and to continue it. Now, the organization, together with the local authorities, develops a number of projects with participation of several European partners, including those from Poland and Romania.

HISTORICAL SITE CAMP OF KING CHARLES XII OF SWEDEN AT VARNITA: VALORIZATION AND PROMOTION (SITVAR)

“Woman, Hope, Future” Civil Society Organization

Location
village of Varnita, Moldova

Implementation period
May 2016 — May 2017

Project coordinator
Veronica Stefaniuc

Context: Problem Solved by the Project

The historical-cultural object of heritage — the “Camp of King of Sweden Charles XII in Varnita” — dates back to the early 18th century and is registered as a local branch of the National History Museum of Moldova. This place is of historical and memorial importance on the peripheral territory of the former Ottoman Empire; after his defeat near Poltava (1709) Swedish King was compelled to run here, having stopped first near the fortress of Bender, and then — from 1711 to February 1713 — in Varnita. In 1925, the place where the camp of King of Sweden was situated was marked by a commemorative monument in order to pay tribute to historical memory, to value the common Moldavian-Swedish-Turkish historical past, and to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the event called “Kalabalyk” in Varnita, the most tragic one in the history of Turkish-Swedish relations.

In 2013–2015, the Republic of Moldova, Turkey, and Sweden implemented a cultural-scientific project “When Sweden was ruled from Moldova”, and the project SITVAR is, as a matter of fact, a successor of the actions/events carried out then. Its purpose is to rehabilitate and return this object of historical heritage to the socio-cultural context of today’s Moldova, i.e.:

- to carry out scientific and public revaluation of the camp of Charles XII: archival-documentary researches, archeological excavations, and to reveal the remnants of stone constructions in the camp, to preserve them, and to restore the commemorative monument;

- to landscape the site and the territory near to it.

Unlike the previous project, SITVAR is aimed at active involving a wider circle of interested persons, including local authorities that are responsible for this territory development, as well as representatives of business and the local community. It was necessary to find its own approach to each of these groups, still appealing to the common value of this monument of history and culture dedicated to King of Sweden Charles XII in Varnita.

For the association, the strengthening of its role as an important subject in the field of protecting and using the historical-cultural heritage of this territory was not less important. For the first time, the association — with local residents’ support — tried to include the historical monument in the touristic and cultural network of the country, thus actualizing, inter alia, its economic resource for society.

Project Contents

The project was officially launched in April 2016 in Varnita with the assistance of diplomatic missions of Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, and Romania, experts in the field of culture and science, the administration and the local community.

During the first stage of the project, its actions were of a scientific character. The following was done:

- Historical-documentary studies. We found a number of important documents in the National Archive of Romania concerning the camp of King of Sweden Charles XII that provided information on some historical facts, the scheme of the camp, and the commemorative monument. These documents seriously supported the working-out of the project of preservation and restoration of the monument and were the basis of several scientific reports and publications dedicated to the museumification of the camp of King of Sweden Charles XII.

- topographical and archaeological studies of the territory, during which the foundation of the building of the chancellery of Charles XII was found.

- the international scientific conference “Camp of King of Sweden Charles XII in Varnita — researches and valorization” (April 2017) with participation of experts from Romania and Sweden, whose reports were published in the collection of scientific materials “Historical Site — the camp of King of Sweden Charles XII in Varnita. To restore the memory”.

Projects on the preservation of the remnants found at this object, as well as on the restoration of the monument dedicated to King of Sweden Charles XII, developed by experts in the field of heritage, are approved by the National Board on protection of public monuments.

All scientific-research actions within the framework of the project were carried out in close cooperation with our basic partners: the National Museum of the History of Moldova and with the support of the National Agency on inspection and restoration of monuments. Huge assistance to the project was rendered by the local council of the village of Varnita and the administration of the Anenii Noi District Council.

The second stage of work was aimed at popularizing and promoting this cultural-historical sight with the attraction of the public and the local community. We managed to carry out:

- Restoration and conservation of the monument installed in 1925 and the revealed remains of the chancellery of King Charles XII; we built a fence around it; landscape gardening;

- A thematic stand at the photo-documentary exhibition “Historical Site — the camp of King of Sweden Charles XII in Varnita. History Archive”.

There were regular publications on the project course in the local mass media that informed the local community on the researches and what was found during them. We carried out several meetings, discussions with local authorities and invited experts from Moldova and abroad (Ukraine, Sweden, Turkey) where we discussed questions of preservation and restoration of the camp, participation of communities, coordination of platforms and lands, ways of finding additional financial sources. Thanks to such system efforts aimed at providing transparency and sustainability of the project, it was easier for us to involve a considerable number of representatives of the local community, pupils of school, and other cultural establishments of the village of Varnita.

Conclusions

Our restored historical monument has been somewhat rehabilitated and introduced into the national and international cultural and scientific network. Here are some received results that justify the idea of continuing this project, possibly, already in a new form:

- Experts from Sweden we cooperated with during the project have offered an idea of reconstructing several objects of the camp, including the house of the Swedish soldier and the chancellery of King Charles XII;

- Representatives of the local intelligentzia who participated in the implementation of the project have started an idea of further researches in the segment of the common history of Moldavian-Swedish-Turkish relations;

- Ukrainian experts propose further studies in Russian and Swedish archives concerning mutual relations between Hetman Ivan Mazepa and King Charles XII;

- The local community is ready to continue the gardening process on the site, suggesting the creation of a park and conducting of geological researches.

We are convinced that the project should be continued because the already involved local residents want to turn this historical monument into an attractive sight for tourists from Moldova and other countries. The local community considers that the territory of the camp of King of Sweden Charles XII, as an object of historical- cultural heritage of European value, should become an alive part of local and national history and culture; moreover, it is able to bring its contribution to the economic and cultural development of this district.

CLAY OF TIME: A JOURNEY OF CERAMICS THROUGH AGES

“We Open Moldova” (“Descoperim Moldova”) Public Association

Location
Chisinau, municipality Ungheni, Moldova

Implementation period
May 2016 — April 2017

Project coordinator
Alexandru Nicolaescu

Context. Problem Solved by the Project

The project is dedicated to the archaeological culture of the Cucuteni — Trypillia region (6th–4th centuries BC), presented, in particular, by fictile art and unique ceramics, spread on the territories of Moldova, Ukraine, and Romania. In Moldova, these valuable traces of our ancestors’ culture are not paid proper attention by the scientific community and potentially interested public. We have suggested rethinking openly this national heritage and proposed a simple, but integrated interdisciplinary format — to immerse in this ancient kind of arts and crafts in a number of special master classes with a subsequent possibility of presenting works at an exhibition.

The idea was to create a live and beautiful link between various areas of culture: history, applied crafts, and art. We invited students of two higher educational establishments of the country (State University of Moldova; State Pedagogical University) to participate. The second group included experts in the field of Cucuteni–Trypillia culture — historians, archeologists, museum employees, and researchers of symbolics and ornaments of objects of the heritage of one of the most ancient European civilizations.

We worked on the concept and administration of this project in partnership with the non-state association «Woman for modern society». This initiative was to become a basis of future cooperation in joint projects between several organizations involved in the sphere of interdisciplinary education and advancement of cultural heritage.

Our team was aimed at becoming a leading organization in actions/events at the joint of archeology and art interpretation and becoming a strong intermediary in the establishing of long-term connections between educational institutions and other organizations in this sphere.

Project Contents

20 students together with tutors and other experts in the field of cultural heritage had an opportunity to share their knowledge and to receive new skills in the work with clay and other materials the way it was characteristic of Cucuteni–Trypillia culture.

Participants passed through a full cycle of educational actions/events: theoretical archeology during presentations and lectures at both universities; experimental archeology and a visit to the archaeological site in Stolniceni, the Hincesti District; fact-finding visits to the National History Museum of Moldova and the National Art Museum of Moldova; the scientific seminar «Archaeological cults in contemporary art» at the History Department of State Moldavian University. The first stage of the project was ended by a one-week practical seminar in ceramics at the fine arts and design department of Chisinau Pedagogical University. Students worked under the direction of skilled tutors to create their art works that became a basis of the mobile exposition «Ceramics travel in time». Three exhibitions were organized from April to May 2017 in various cultural establishments of the country, including in the National Art Museum within the framework of the CHOICE public discussion on Moldova’s cultural policy in the field of heritage. At the fine arts and design department, there was an official opening of an exhibition and a presentation of the CHOICE project attended by students and tutors of art high schools from Odessa (Ukraine) and Iasi (Romania). In the regional museum of the Ungheni Municipality, the exhibition was presented to the local public.

During the project actions, we saw that two areas — theoretical archeology and art practice — have much more in common than we initially believed and that similar projects are really needed, at least, by professional and intellectual communities.

Achievements We Are Proud of

- First of all, for the first time, students received an opportunity of such a practice and cooperation; their educational programs do not include such kinds of activity important for educational processes.

- At once several cultural spaces desired to exhibit works of participants. It is important for higher education establishments as not all students have had a possibility to demonstrate their skills and to receive new ones and such exhibitions are a stimulus for students to reveal themselves creatively and intellectually in the future.

- Visitors of all three exhibitions have expressed their interest, which makes us confident that this work has to be continued.

- Strong communication between the fine arts department of State Pedagogical University and the History Department of State University of Moldova. We are impressed by the teamwork of the strongest experts and advisers from both universities: Andrei Korobchan, Any Simak, Svetlana Shugzhdy, Marianna Vasilace, and Michaela Dvornik. It became obvious that the vacuum of links between institutions is easily filled if there are constructive occasions for professional contacts between experts and this is why the project activity is significant.

- We have strengthened our acquaintance with the administration of the museum in Ungheni and the village of Vasieni, Ialoveni District, and we hope they are still interested in supporting new initiatives aimed at cultural heritage actualization.

Also, during actions/events within the framework of CHOICE, we build contacts with other NGOs that implement projects in the field of cultural heritage, such as PRO-RESPIRO and ODIP. The project in Vasieni on the basis of the local museum became a good example for us — it allowed us to understand better how an art exhibition can become a strong "product" of the community.

Our project also demonstrates that the development of a professional network between cultural establishments and educational institutions is necessary for faster and qualitative development of all interested parties. Our project can serve as a good motivation to include similar projects in future educational programs of universities at the expense of their own resources.

Role of the Project for Our Growth

First, we ourselves have learned much more about Cucuteni–Trypillia culture and better understood its meaning. Second, the project has made us improve our administrative, logistical, and other competence. For some members of our team, it was the first activity of such a kind and scale. However, as a result, having passed some internal re-structurization, we managed to prove ourselves successfully in the sector of the work with heritage and occupied our own niche.

Similar initiatives can be implemented at the regional level and unite secondary education establishments such as lyceums and schools. They can be implemented in Romania and Ukraine, where Cucuteni–Trypillia culture existed as well, or used as a model for interdisciplinary work in other spheres.

The project has rendered a great influence on my own personal development as a professional who faced serious problems that required my full involvement. I could remotely observe and participate in all actions / events, which made me understand risks and successes; I cooperated with all participants, listened to their desires, requirements, and responses, which made me realize better the responsibility of the leader of the project, for which I am very grateful to CHOICE as a whole and for the support and trust shown by ICOM-Moldova in particular.

FROM REMEBERING TO RECONCILIATION — CREATING MEETING POINT FOR DIALOGUES BETWEEN GENERATIONS

“Genesis” Civil Society Organization

Location
village Mereni, Anenii Noi District

Implementation period
May 2016 — December 2016

Project coordinator
Natalia Procopii-Scobioală

Context. Problems Solved by the Project

The project was born out of our aspiration to provide all interested people with the truthful information on one of the most tragic events in the history of the local community and the country as a whole — the history of deportations and political repressions in Moldova in 1940–1989. This topic is still a black spot of our recent history for both researchers who study this layer of history and people who have no access to the necessary information or have forgotten that the bold view on the past can be very important for society’s maturity.

Our team tried to break some cliches accompanying such difficult topics by “updating” the image of the museum and changing the presentation ways. For this purpose, we offered a new model of developing the local museum in the village of Mereni not far from Chisinau — to create a place where visitors not only look at exhibits, but also completely participate in the process of education and interpretation of this or that subject or image. Thus, we continued the work of the founder of our organization — institutionalization of the museum and its advancement, the organization of additional exhibition areas and modules.

We concentrated on the creation of the Museum to the memory of victims of political repressions — a complex called to throw light on the political repressions occurred in Moldova and to become a significant center of moral upbringing and formation of young generations in the spirit of true values of our nation. Our actions were aimed at preserving cultural memory and lessons of local history on the basis of development of conditions for cultural and so-called nostalgic tourism.

The association of former deported persons and political prisoners of Moldova, the local public administration, and the Ministry of Culture of Moldova were our basic partners.

Project Contents

The open air museum represents a page of local history from the moment of mass deportations. Formally and physically, it consisted of several semantic and thematic sub-divisions: a country house of the 19th century; a museum archive; “A trip to Siberia by trucks”; “A camp”, and a park.

Then, the whole complex should be structured into modules that can display in more details a certain stage in the life of victims of political repressions, which means separate exhibition spaces connected by the same idea. All our searches and experiments can be united in one concept — cultural heritage interpretation.

We gave a chance to visitors to study differently. The museum can be seen, heard, and even felt. Visitors can hear and see exhibits, touch and feel them in halls. The design and composition organization of the museum underline the major component of the cognitive system — air. The museum is located at a small stream in the central part of the village of Mereni.

The project team managed to involve free-of-charge the best museum guides — representatives of senior generations, who passed through various forms of repressions and terror, which provides visitors with the qualitative and effective contents of excursions. After all, only they can provide firsthand perceptions of these events, experiences, and lessons.

To reveal and present the knowledge and life experience of victims of political repressions was the first substantial step of the project. Thanks to our partnership with the association of former deported and political prisoners of Moldova, which has more than 1,800 members, the museum could present memoirs of people deported from different areas of the country. Here, it is necessary to mark that the museum belongs not only to the village, but also the national cultural network.

To make a museum more attractive to today's public, the project team involved youth to design the exposition. About 24 young people from Mereni were involved in the seeking for subjects that are older than 70 years and belong to the period of mass deportations, which could be interesting to visitors. More than 80 exhibits were given by local residents of senior generations, while young people helped to deliver these exhibits that were processed and included in the exposition.

In the course of gathering subjects, young people received numerous professional skills and experience — how to interview carriers of historical memory of this or that community, how to define the spiritual value of an object and to present it to the public in an interesting way. Also, they collected important life stories of the people who gave subjects.

Thanks to these young volunteers, teenagers joined the project, too. They received a unique training platform — pupils and senior people gathered for discussions on the same topic. Thus, we created such conditions for dialogue and mutual understanding between generations, which do not always appear in everyday life.

It is also important to notice that within 2016 we found, at least, 7 former deported people who were ready to help with the process of training and to share their history with visitors.

During the project implementation, in the museum, there were individual and collective visits. There were not less than 20 official visits (including officials), 18 group visits, and about 20 other individual visits. In total, during the project implementation, 1,860 people visited it.

Our Other Achievements

On July 6th 2016, the museum became a part of the unique tourist route "Decade of deportations", during which we had about 300 visitors during one day.

Later, in the autumn of 2016, during the festival "Flori De Mar In Toamna" ("Autumn Apple Color"), all its participants became our visitors, including representatives of ethno-folkloristic ensembles from 10 districts of Moldova.

The museum became attractive for amateur and professional artists. Museum module №2 became a place of meetings and family photos.

Therefore, it is possible to say that one of the project purposes — to provide favorable conditions for dialogue and better understanding of the history of deportations — has been reached substantially.

The museum collective has found a way to attract additional visitors — a virtual trip to the museum on the web-site **www.deportee-mus.eu** in three languages, with detailed information on the museum, photo gallery, and virtual tour.

One more achievement of the project is the improved infrastructure of the museum. On the territory of modules 1 and 2, there appeared paths with high-quality blacktop. On the territory of the museum, there are works now to install 20 metal information stands.

The museum exposition will soon have a new module that will present visitors one of the most tragic parts of the history of deportations. As a result of negotiations between the administration of the village of Mereni and the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Moldova, the government ordered to give the museum a railway car where a part of the constant exposition will be placed.

PROJECT STORIES: UKRAINE

GALICIAN CALIFORNIA

Ukrainian Society for Boryslav Historic and Cultural Monument Protection

Location
Town of Boryslav and Skhidnytsia Township

Implementation period
April 2016 — April 2017

Project coordinator
Albertina Buchynska

Context: Issues Addressed by the Project

Boryslav is a unique town situated on an active oil, gas and native paraffin production field dotted with mineral medicinal water springs. It is a historic oil and gas production hub of Europe (late 19th and early 20th centuries) with its preserved traditional cultural environment character. The Boryslav Town Council territory includes a renowned modern balneological resort, Skhidnytsia township, which has also been an oil production centre of Ukraine's western region. Due to its rich culture, traditions and unique artefacts, the town has massive chances to become an attractive tourist destination for Ukraine, as well as for Europe and globally. Multiple areas of unique interest have been preserved till this very day, such as 1898 Adam Mickiewicz monument, former Roman Catholic 1900 St. Barbara church, 1929 building of the Dormition of the Theotocos church with its 10 Petro Kholodnyi stained-glass windows, as well as some valuable oil and gas industry facilities, such as one-off hole-type well complete with timber blockings and willow work intended for oil and native paraffin extraction, locations of Europe's first gas processing plant built in 1914, 1922 gas-firing power plant, authentic solid-metal riveted telephone communication supports made in the early 20th century and the natural reserve stock facilities.

The project targets addressing the region's two major challenges in the area of heritage: its monuments have not been properly studied, they are not documented and are not maintained in an appropriate conservation condition; and a low public awareness as to the historic and cultural value of the local sights, inaction of the local authorities and a feeble impact of the public initiatives involved in the cultural sphere, which in combination lead to a monument limbo status, destruction and vandalism. Accordingly, the project seeks to explore, study and protect the local history and culture monuments, as well as to make a change in the community mentality, which implies promoting the idea of the monuments' value and boosting the civic initiative impact on the formation of the regional strategies in the cultural heritage domain.

Project Contents

Following the project-related research results, we have created:

- A catalogue register of the Boryslav and Skhidnytsia history and culture monuments, which is accessible on our organisation's website **www.boryslav.com.ua**, likewise created within the CHOICE framework. The register includes descriptions of each facility's historic and cultural significance and present condition. The monuments have been divided into groups: statuesque, architectural or urban planning, historic or cultural, religious, industrial or engineering, and natural. At this stage of the research, the register includes 85 monuments of Boryslav and Skhidnytsia; however, upon the project's completion it can be supplemented to reach approximately 200 facilities.

Following a lengthy debate, 20 facilities were selected out of the catalogued ones, to which information plates containing data in Ukrainian and English, as well as an QR code with a link to a more detailed information on our Society's website, have been produced and installed;

- 5 topical sightseeing routes: history and regional natural history, industry, literature and arts, Sacrum and religious pilgrimage. They are supplemented with a Boryslav and Skhidnytsia accommodation and catering offer database;

- A guide-book related to the historic and cultural monuments and the sightseeing routes developed;

- A Boryslav and Skhidnytsia map, which shows on its one side a Boryslav map with indicated history and culture sights along the routes developed and a similar Skhidnytsia map overleaf;

- A training seminar for representatives of the local cultural and educational institutions, such as schools, upper secondary school, museums, libraries and NGOs, and civic activists, has caused repercussions. The meeting included two parts. The first one was dedicated to introductory reports presented by the organisers on the project itself, on Boryslav and Skhidnytsia history, on the present condition of the historic and cultural monuments in the region and on a possible impact of the civic initiatives on the town development in the area of cultural heritage. Part two represented a training trip to the Boryslav and Skhidnytsia facilities described and included in the sightseeing routes. The participants selected are seen as potential promoters of the historic and cultural facilities, and some visiting tourists were present among them. The astonishing fact is that even the town intellectuals know surprisingly little about their community's cultural heritage. Furthermore, they have a faint idea how they can assist in preserving and developing the monuments or in influencing the town's development strategy in this sphere. The two seminar days were very long and busy and culminated in a heated discussion and planning of possible joint actions.

Following the results of the work, we have drafted some recommendations on approval and provision to a number of selected Boryslav and Skhidnytsia history and culture monuments of a regional- and national-level significance protection status and nominating individual unique historic and cultural monuments for inclusion on the list of the UNESCO World Heritage Protection Facilities in Ukraine. The authorities have also received for reviewing some recommendations on the development strategies of the region's cultural, sightseeing and travelling activities; and

- The conference Cultural Heritage of the Ciscarpathian Petroleum Capital held in April has enriched us with new visions in the area of cultural patrimony protection and with new ideas. The discussions both over our project results and materials contributed by other experts centred around new approaches to management in the historic and cultural heritage sphere for the region at large.

Partner Network Growth and Organisational Development

Permanent-basis communication with the local authorities has represented an extremely important part of the project. The project provided for two formal working meetings, as well as regular informal consultations with the representatives of the Boryslav Town Council and the Skhidnytsia Township Council. Despite financing shortages and lack of a clear action plan in the area of the region's cultural heritage, the local authorities have demonstrated their readiness to positive changes in the town and to a dialogue with the civic initiatives.

A keen interest in the project results has also been displayed on behalf of the local small and medium businesses: talking on attracting investment and increasing numbers of the tourists coming is gaining momentum.

Involvement in the project has prompted our Society to give up its mock modesty and promote our activities in a more pro-active way. Gradually, we are becoming an ever more visible initiative centre, as far as holding any local and regional training or educational, history research and cultural or entertaining events is concerned. While interacting both with the town residents and with the town authorities, we have not missed an opportunity to upgrade the role our Society plays in promotion of the regional cultural monument significance and its influence on the decision-making process in the cultural domain. We have succeeded in establishing robust working contacts with the Boryslav History and Regional Natural History Museum, with the local civil society organisations Boryslav-HUB, Boryslav Oil and Gas Industry Museum and Typical Boryslav. New active members have joined our organisation.

Apart from its chief goals and objectives, such as research, protection of the local culture and history monuments and communication in the relevant spheres, we shall focus more on working with young people and schoolchildren who were little involved in the current Galician California project. Beyond any reasonable doubt, any project is a new challenge in the project management, strategic planning and marketing research thinking; and we accept and appreciate such challenges.

BRODY TOWN'S COMMUNITY AND POLYCULTURAL HERITAGE: POTENTIAL, INTERACTION AND PROSPECTS

"Kray" Public Association

Location
Brody, Ukraine

Implementation period
April 2016 — April 2017

Project coordinator
Vasyl Strilchuk

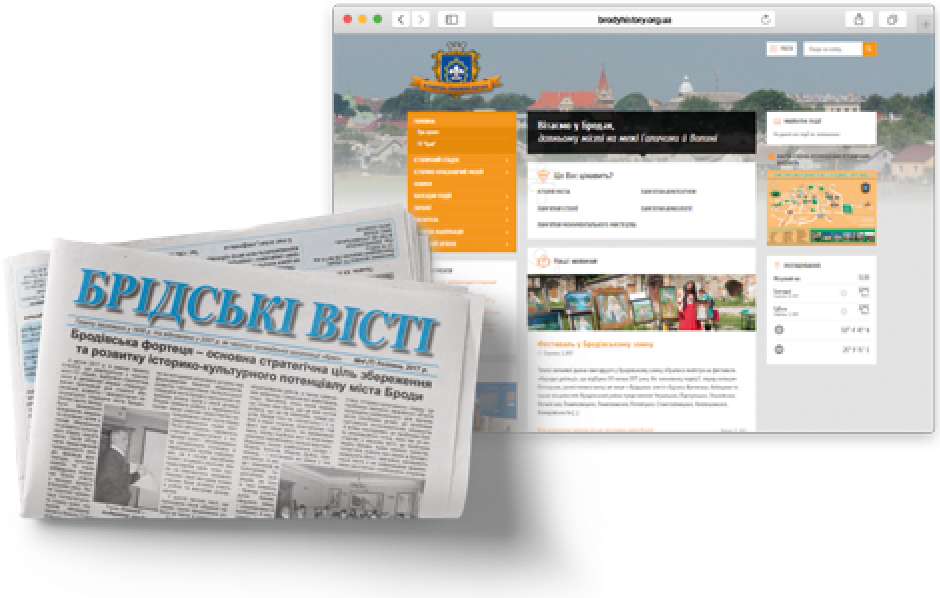
Музей
Museum

Context. Issues Addressed by the Project

Brody has been entered on Ukraine's historic city and town register and is widely known due to its numerous monuments, prominent personalities and its preserved planning of an "ideal town" dating back to the 17th century. It accommodates 33 architectural monuments, five of which having a national significance status. A number of historic sites have no status at all and have been abandoned for a long time in a desolate condition. This unused cultural potential represents today the town's "burden," rather than its merit.

The project was intended to energise the Brody community within the scope of some applied issues related to conservation of the town's historic polycultural heritage. By 'polyculturalism' we mean a stratal multitude of ethnic cultures and subcultures, historic epochs with their relevant architectural styles or other visual urban codes; whereas by 'community' we mean, above all, active representatives of the public, brainpower clerisy (educational community: teachers, pupils and students) and profile experts at the local museum, regional ethnographers, as well as religious activists and representatives of the local authorities or self-government. Our keen interest has been likewise focused on some external groups, such as tourists, researchers, potential investors, etc.

We saw the major expected practical outcome in elaborating some general proposals on the town development in the sphere of its historic and cultural patrimony's preservation and enjoyment.


brodyhistory.org.ua
БРІДСЬКІ ВІСТІ
Бродівська фортеця – основна стратегічна ціль збереження та розвитку історико-культурного потенціалу міста Броди

Project Contents

- Research into the Polycultural Historic Heritage of the Town of Brody (Potential, Problems and Perspectives) complete with a full list and description of Brody's major monuments, indication at the main problems related to the state historic heritage registers, positive and negative experience of the societal interaction with the historic environment, as well as individual recommendations and suggestions;

- Website of the Historic Heritage of Brody project **www.brodyhistory.org.ua**, which contains information on all the sights entered on the state registers, information on the project, Kray CSO and the Brody Regional History Museum and many other things. The photo and video galleries are presented separately, as well as the Library section which contains digital copies of individual local history publications, guide-books, booklets, The Brodovskie Vesti magazines and a layout of the town's historic monuments. The website informs on the actions and events held within the project framework and in the town's cultural life;

- The Brodovskie Vesti, a corporate newspaper by the Kray CSO, 4 issues with a circulation of 1000 copies each. The publications contain news on our project and information on the town's historic facilities and problems related to their preservation. The publication has been distributed free of charge during the cultural or educational events, guidance association meetings or other events held by the educational professionals, among the local council deputies and representatives of the authorities, NGOs or librarians of Brody District. The newspapers are available at the district library, museum, bookstore and newspaper stalls (handed out to the people who buy the local press). Electronic copies of the publication are accessible on the project's Facebook page Town of Brody's Community and Polycultural Heritage, as well as on our organisation's website;

- The Training workshop cycle Historic and Cultural Heritage Revitalisation: Practical Experience, Public Involvement and Search for Resources for civic activists, authorities and businesses (approximately 100 persons). Taras Vozniak, Elena Biriulina and Oleh Rybchynskyi, renowned patrimony sector experts, who were invited, briefed the attendants on the revitalisation experience from individual facilities, places and towns in Ukraine and Europe. The workshops have encouraged the active community members to discussing the issues related to Brody and Brody District branding and promotion, which fact has been reflected in meetings of the Active Province Club;

- The Brody Quest Local History Game was included in the programme of celebrating the Brody Town Day in September 2016. We had elaborated an appropriate Quest Regulation, coordinated our work with the Brody District State Administration's Education Department and with the administrations, teachers and pupils or students of the town schools and teachers'-training college, as well as with the Town Council. The game included a competition among 5 teams of pupils, college students and volunteers, while for evaluation purposes we invited a special judging panel. The Brody Quest format was appreciated by all its participants; and, as a result, the Education Department has later organised two more such events;

- 24 signs leading to individual historic sites and 33 information plates with the QR codes at the monuments; and

- 8 public lectures on territories of the town monuments: in the open air near some valuable historic facilities, in sacral monuments and at the educational institutions, on preserving which we wanted to draw the town people's attention. To participate in the events, 433 persons were registered, while in fact they were joined for discussions by many active passers-by. Later the popular public lecture format has been adopted by the Brody Local History Museum jointly with the District Library.

Our project has culminated in drafting an action plan submitted for reviewing by the Brody Town Council with the goal in mind of its further utilisation for conservation of the town's historic and cultural heritage.

Organisational and Partner Network Development

The work which has been conducted in the heritage sector, as a rule, does not "spring up" fast, but we can be proud of the animation among the event participants (judging by the questionnaires filled out by the training session or lecture attendants and comments made on the social media pages). We have identified a general growing interest in the heritage agenda on behalf of the public of various age categories (for example, the number of museum excursion requests has gone up). Public opinion is gradually formed as to the need for preserving the town's historic patrimony: there are some cases appearing that the town residents bitterly condemn with a lot of public response private encroachments on the cultural monument integrity, which forces the town authorities to influence the owners.

On the whole, the Kray Association has strengthened its professional role in the issues related to the local historic and cultural heritage preservation; our recognisability has been on the rise, which motivates our organisation members to keep on abreast of the regional public life. Our organisation has expanded its cooperation network with the civic activists, found new partners and takes part in various events or trainings held in our town.

We are grateful to the Brody Town Council, which has supported our initiative from the very beginning, also in co-financing, and has adopted a relevant programme. The administration representatives and deputies have been engaged in the project events, as well as in discussing and addressing some individual issues.

Information support to the Kray CSO has been provided by the local mass media: The Golos Vozrozhdenia and The Brody Vechernie newspapers have been bringing their coverage of our events and published more local history materials (which may be seen as a project side effect). The Brody TV and Radiobroadcasting Company has covered the project-related events on its TV and radio air and provided an online access to the video versions of all the project's public lectures.

A prominent role in the project implementation has been played by communication with the Cultural Management Centre (Lviv) and mutual consultations with the CHOICE project members, such as "Kremenets Environmental League" and "Starokostiantyniv Non-Indifferent".

Our further plans will prioritise revitalisation of a key cultural heritage facility in the town, i.e. the Brody castle, with its possible future museumification. Jointly with the Town Council and the Brody Local History Museum, we look into a possible revitalisation of the market-place vaults.

DNIPRO CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

“Kultura Medialna” Civil Society Organisation

Location
Dnipro (Dnipropetrovsk)

Implementation period
April 2016 — April 2017

Project coordinator
Yulia Ovcharenko

Context: Issues Addressed by the Project

The cultural landscape of Dnipro (former Dnipropetrovsk) is greatly varied. It contains strata of historic epochs and traces of various nations of the world, which have contributed to the city development. The architectural and cultural sights include monuments of different conservation levels: palaces, nobility manor houses, commercial apartment buildings, intellectuals’ clubs, city gardens and small factories of Jewish, German, British or Belgian entrepreneurs dating back to the Yekaterinoslav times. It is also about the large-scale heavy industries, concrete constructivism, rocket and missile engineering, residential neighbourhoods, theatres, movie halls and culture palaces of the Soviet era. And some modern touches, which have appeared in independent Ukraine and enriched the city image with an aura of a commercial and business hub. Each epoch has also entrenched itself in the cultural background with its stories, legends, habits, memories and myths. Dnipro’s inherent feature is that its ancient strata are rapidly declining, stories are forgotten and huge buildings lie dormant and are destroyed, and, along with them, the intangible cultural heritage is forgotten.

The key problem standing in the way to any systemic changes is the situation is the professional cultural sector. Obsolete infrastructure and outdated methods of its management no longer meet the needs of a contemporary citizen. They perpetuate the old Soviet-era behaviourist patterns in the society and leave no space for the development of new meanings. We were perfectly well aware of it at the very start and, therefore, included the problem among the project priorities.

Thus, our project targets the physical and mental images of Dnipro City and is intended to open up a new view on its peculiarities and stepping up the attention level to the generic things: space, responsibility and the future. The main idea is to resuscitate an old form by filling it with a new content and testing its tolerance of innovation. The major target audience is the young generation, because it is instrumental in what the urban landscapes are going to become like in the future.

Project Contents

- In the first project part, entitled Urban Landscapes, we have dealt with the ‘iconic locations,’ i.e. historic and cultural sites, by “settling” there for the time being some experimental arts. In order to attract attention of a wide audience, presentation of the work was carried out within the framework of the Construction Audio-Visual and New Media Festival in the urban space between the 30th of May and the 5th of June 2016. The festival was held in the city for the third time with its audience growing with every passing year. Each time it provides an opportunity to introduce their city to the citizens in a new way, to explore the forgotten beauty of habitual places, as well as to demonstrate modern art products by foreign and Ukrainian artists.

Four spots have been engaged, each one of them playing a vital role in the city’s sociocultural life:

- 2 scarcely used halls of the regional L. Kogan Philharmonic Society: the great hall with its unique acoustics, which is now undergoing a refurbishment process, and the “banquet” hall, which is occasionally rented to stage commercial expositions or private events. In this way we sought to introduce to the public the opportunities provided by its entire space, as well the new arts. The philharmonic has a semi-forgotten by the city century-long history, although founded initially as an ambitious and unique communication space for artistic activists;

- The “banquet” hall was used every day during the festival week by Japanese artist Kenta Nakagawa to demonstrate his audio-visual performance Inner Mind Architecture. The large-scale installation included multi-layer semi-transparent screens, which were brought to life thanks to sound, multimedia beaming, movement of air, smoke and light. The hall acquired an inimitable magic atmosphere, it was filled with digital forms and resonated either with the natural sounds or with electronic music rhythms and engaged the viewers in an interactive performance. The installation was specially adopted to the hall and played with its architecture. A creative team of 15 active youngsters assisted in setting up and operating the installation. Involvement of creative young people in preparation of concerts and installations is our traditional way to develop civic activity. The project was seen within a week by more than 1300 persons, some of whom attending several times and bringing along their friends;

- The 3rd of June saw a presentation at the great hall of the Philharmonic Society of an electroacoustic music concert by Tom Terrien’s musician group (France), TYTO ALBA Duo (Czech Republic), DZ'OB (Ukraine) and VJ Igor Inqit / Blck_Box. The unique acoustics hall began sounding in a modern way and it was discovered by 250 young spectators, who had never been here at concerts before;

- An atrium of the Scientific Library of the National O. Honchar University, which interconnects all its five floors,

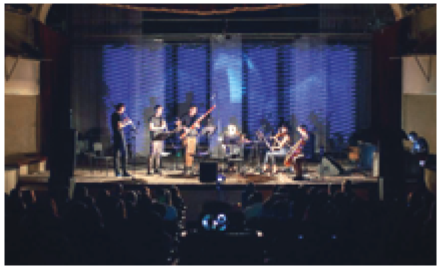
accommodates a winter garden with palms and lianas. On the 1st of June it received an experimental music concert by Swedish artists David Sabel and Isak Eldh and Danish performer Mads Emil Nielsen. Six students from various universities were involved in preparation for the concert. The musicians positioned themselves downstairs right among the plants and the entire atrium space up to its glass roof was filled with electronic music sounds, while the guests listened to them from the balconies of all the five floors. The concert went on until it got dark and the natural lighting with unusual sounds transformed the library space by providing an outlandish aesthetic experience to some 150 spectators. The children present could also take part in music creation; and

- A major exhibition project With No Seat Reservation was held at the South Railway Station between the 29th of May and the 11th of June 2016. It was dedicated to the topic of internally displaced people and the perception of the city as a "home." The exhibition was created by the composite authors of the Kultura Medialna Civil Society Organisation and covered three halls: Arrival with its Cube spatial installation, Transit Area containing 6 video interviews with the displaced people on their experience of living in a new city and Waiting Room with its video performance on the life of children in the Dnipro modular settlement; and

- The project's second part was dedicated to "Memory Landscape" and targeted updating approaches to cultural patrimony presentation and rethinking of the Soviet heritage. This part has been prepared in collaboration with the Literary Dnieper Region Museum, whose space was used to stage a discussion programme of the Construction Festival made up of 4 podium discussions in June, as well as a multimedia exhibition CP for Culture Palace in autumn 2016; and

- The Culturological CP research has begun with visiting Dnipro Region's culture palaces or houses and community centres to get an idea of the present condition of this post-Soviet heritage. As a result, we have recorded a series of documentary videos, which demonstrate the entire diversity of the CP activity forms and programmes, and made an analysis into their statistical data. The videos along with some artistic installations were exhibited at the museum between the 29th of October and the 6th of November 2016.

Within the process of research and observation we have seen an enormous need for transformation and modernisation of the culture palaces. However, the vector of the transformations and the needs of the cultural institutions themselves were not obvious to us. This is why we continued the research by holding a mini-conference on the 19th and 20th of November, where we worked with a focus group made up of 14 Dnipro and Dnipro Region CP employees and clarified their professional and personal motivations along with their wishes and development prospects. The conference was supplemented with motivation presentations by our Georgian and Czech colleagues on transformation experience of similar cultural heritage. The focus group work results have indicated that the circumstances pertinent to a Culture Palace's operations in the regional centre and in its provincial communities differ very much. Yet, they are unified in ignorance of the modern forms of handling the local residents and their generic positive evaluation of their activities against the background of a striking poverty and narrowness of their agendas, as well as in their dependence on obsolete funding forms.



Summing-up and Way Forward

Having performed an extensive work with various cultural institutions, we have also had to note that the strongest resistance to any reforms is staged by the Culture Palace employees themselves, who are driven by fear of changes, experiments or sanctions imposed by higher management. Quite frequently the fear is underpinned by lack of the relevant managerial skills and, again and again, is reduced to dependence on the government financing. The objective behind our project was to demonstrate new experiences and their advantages. We have succeeded in attracting new audiences, establishing international cooperation and providing platforms for creative work of the young Ukrainian artists, while proving that the new working methods are promising and efficient. However, for the sake of long-term changes to come about, a strategic approach to each and every one of the facilities will be a must, along with systematic work on their agendas. The team of the "Kultura Medialna" Civil Society Organisation has developed a short-term plan related to transforming the city's philharmonic society into a modern European cultural centre. The process will be expedited by the partnerships, which have appeared or have been reinforced during the work on the Dnipro Cultural Landscapes project. Artistic interventions in the city's cultural and industrial heritage sites will be supported in 2017 by the Cultural Capital programme; whereas the CP project development will be featured among our team's long-term initiatives for the next three years. With this goal in mind, we have established contacts with three towns of Kharkiv Region and Novoolexandrivsk United Territorial Unit of Dnipro Region.

REVIVAL OF A LEGEND: WAY TO DEVELOPMENT AND CONSOLIDATION

“TOTEM” Cultural Development Centre

Location
Kherson Region, Ukraine

Implementation period
April 2016 — May 2017

Project coordinator
Elena Afanasieva

Context: Issues Addressed by the Project

The project framework has provided an opportunity to implement a comprehensive approach to the creation of a regional cultural landscape and proper conditions for revitalisation of the heritage sites, which are situated farther away from the town of Kherson, which is the regional administrative centre, and, therefore, are in a critical condition. The authorities lack vision as to how they can be revived and filled with a new functional and axiological content, while the local residents have lost interest in them. We have deliberately chosen “difficult” facilities, which, in case of a further passive stance on behalf of the local community and authorities, might be destroyed in the nearest future. The objective behind the project was to draw attention to them, to form a team of like-minded persons, to identify the ways to saving and developing these historic and cultural heritage sites and to include their revitalisation in the regional development plans. The emphasis was made on reviving the site-related legends and on energising the local community: researchers, local historians and the public at large.

Project Contents

During the first stage, assisted by some experts and local activists, we have formed a Kherson Region heritage site database and then pinpointed 13 heritage sites, which potentially meet our criteria, to have selected eventually three of them:

- Lighthouse on the Isle of Jarylhach (Skadivsk District) built in 1902. Components for the lighthouse have been manufactured in France and delivered to Skadivsk. The lighthouse is closely connected with the name of famous futurist author David Burliuk, who described it in his Sea Novel. The lighthouse represents a symbol of the Isle of Jarylhach and Skadivsk, but in the recent years the local groups and authorities have been lobbying the idea of pulling the lighthouse down allegedly because of its unsafe condition;

- House of painter Polina Raiko (Oleshky District). Granny Polina began painting aged 69 upon the deaths of her daughter, son and husband and within a few years painted her whole house all over (walls, ceilings and doors). In 2004 the TOTEM Centre published a complete catalogue of Polina Raiko’s works; however, following her death the same year attempts to set up a museum in the house failed due to lack of interest on behalf of the authorities and a passive position taken by the Monument Protection Society. We have succeeded in preventing the house destruction: an heir intended to sell it to neighbours, who only needed land (the house would have been destroyed); and

- Watchtower (Vesele Village, Berislav District), also known as the Lithuanian Tower or Vitaut’s Tower. The donjon tower represents the only fortification structure of the type dating back to the times Great Duke Lithuanian Vitaut, which has been preserved in Ukraine till this very day. The tower is facing a threat of destruction due to the plans to build phase 2 of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant: the tower gets in the way of the construction project.

As a result, the project has provided a basis for three full-fledged advocacy campaigns. With regard to each site, a site-specific strategy has been developed and implemented, which fact has led to local community energising and rallying efforts aimed at their conservation and revitalisation. Modern artists have been instrumental in creating an attractive atmosphere, while developing new bicycle routes has served to step up the numbers of tourists visiting the facilities.

- Isle of Jarylhach Lighthouse

First and foremost, we were supposed to achieve transparency in the Skadivsk local authorities’ activities. In 2015 a technical expert opinion of the lighthouse condition was contracted, but the procedure was carried out with no involvement of the Monument Protection Society, which did not grant permission to dismantling. It became obvious that the local authorities were reluctant to attract “unwarranted attention” to the issue of lighthouse protection. This is why, exactly with the goal in mind of attracting the attention of the public, authorities and mass media to the issue, a visit to the Isle of Jarylhach by a team of artists and Society experts was organised. The experts faced a task to evaluate the lighthouse condition, whereas the artists were to make illustrations to David Burliuk’s Sea Novel. This kind of activity could not be ignored by the local Skadivsk authorities. On the activist team visit date, the local authorities organised an action entitled Clean Lighthouse: made arrangements to ensure access to the island for volunteers, who collected and evacuated waste from the natural reserve territory, as well as initiated ways to address the waste problem in the future. The TOTEM team was met at the lighthouse by the local news people and the Skadivsk administration representatives. The first discussion with the project activists and experts of the Monument Protection Society was held right there at the lighthouse. Thereafter, a special social media group was created from among the Skadivsk and Kherson activists, Monument Protection Society experts, representatives of the authorities and media people. The group has become a major communication tool, which has enabled transparency of the local authorities’ actions. As of today, we have received and placed on the group page the results of the lighthouse's technical expert opinion; besides, ideas pertinent to its preservation are under debate.

- Artist Polina Raiko's house

Apart from convincing to collaboration the local authorities, we were likewise to develop jointly with them a salvation strategy in respect of this one-off cultural heritage site. Following some futile attempts to find the house owners, we put for ourselves as our tasks to be completed lobbying the entry of Polina Raiko's house on the cultural monument list, looking into the legal possibilities of transferring its ownership title to the government and creating a museum concept.

At the first stage, we had to energise the local community, and so we suggested that artists spend one night at Polina Raiko's home and create their works. The exercise's result was an exhibition named Polina Raiko's Dreams, which has brought into focus the issue of house conservation, since all the authors made publications of their observations, noted the fact of the house and murals' destruction and appealed to the public for the heritage preservation. Our project has demonstrated a possible foundation in the house of a museum, as well as an art residence as a revitalisation tool: this is exactly the format which would enable making it "a living being" and filling it with creative activities. Besides, our project framework has been used by our partner organisation Kherson Bike Forum to develop and launch a bicycle route, which has also caused a lot of commotion among the travel business entities.

The issue of Polina Raiko's house preservation has been covered by us in the local and national mass media. Following a series of journalistic stories brought by the central Ukrainian TV channels, the Directorate of Culture has agreed with our action plan to enter the house on the cultural monument register. Now we are getting ready a document package to be submitted to the Monument Protection Society.

The activities undertaken have cropped in a situation, when in 2017 the regional budget has allocated to founding a Polina Raiko house museum UAH 650,000, and creation of Ukraine's first naive art museum in the house has been entered on the action plan list of the 2017 Regional Culture and Spirituality Development Programme.

- Watchtower (Vitaut's Tower)

The strategy relevant to the conservation and protection of this unique facility of historic, cultural and architectural heritage has required the creation of a coalition of organisations and activists, since the issue of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant expansion has many aspects, including the economic one.

To begin with, we arranged a high-profile art event near the tower, which was attended by more than 30 authors and activists. We also sought support from the Trubetskoys' farm winery, because the tower is situated on the farm land and is owned by it (the land, on which the tower stands, is owned by the power plant, while the tower itself is owned by the Trubetskoys' farm. This is exactly the reason why the farm has failed to include the tower in its reconstruction plans). The Trubetskoys' farm winery has granted its support to the festival and subsequently become our partner in our actions aimed at the tower protection and conservation.

The festival has enabled collecting in one spot the like-minded people and dramatically demonstrated the Watchtower tourist potential, as well as informed the attendants on the threats and issues relevant to the tower preservation. Beside the power plant expansion plans, a serious challenge was presented by lack of the tower on the national monument register.

However, due to the efforts exerted by the working team created, as soon as by December 2016 the Watchtower had been entered on the register as a local significance architectural monument, while later it was recommended by the Ministry of Culture for entry on the register with the status of a national significance monument, for which purpose an archaeological survey of the tower and its adjacent area is to be carried out in 2017, and a protection area and a construction work area will be determined.

To inform public at large and to engage new allies or partners, our project framework has been used to draft and publish a brochure, which demonstrates the importance of the Watchtower for the history and culture of the two countries. Before the archaeological survey rolls out, the project framework will allow providing the Watchtower with a protection plate; we shall also invite the Kherson artists to assist us in installing some "protection stones" carrying information and QR codes for demarcation of the protection area boundaries.

By way of a summary

Our key to success was in consolidation of the efforts exerted by the local activists, organisations and creative young people, who have rallied around our shared objective and idea of protecting the cultural, historic and architectural patrimony. An attractive atmosphere around the selected sites has drawn the attention of the authorities and media and served to put in place a situation, when all the stakeholders take part in the processes related to heritage facility conservation by deploying their own resources.

Beyond any reasonable doubt, the project will be continued, as work on each one of the sites described will go on. We have redeemed three extremely valuable heritage facilities and put them again in the sphere of interest of the local public and authorities, and turned them into such an inalienable part of the cultural landscape, that the local communities and the authorities will never dare again to ignore their destruction or to be inactive. Moreover, the project has demonstrated that there are no "missions impossible" in the domain of historic and cultural heritage preservation, whereas the accumulated experience will be used by our partners and us for the development and implementation of campaigns linked to conservation of other tangible and intangible culture monuments.

THE PEARLS OF THE PAST TO MAKE THE NECKLACES OF THE FUTURE

“Kremenets Environmental League” Civil Society Organization

Location
Town of Kremenets, Ukraine

Implementation period
June 2016 — March 2017

Project coordinator
Oksana Tymoshenko

Context: The Issue Addressed by the Project

Kremenets is a town with its history dating more than 800 years back, which, just as recently as a hundred years ago, was inhabited by the three dominant communities: Jewish, Polish and Ukrainian; that being said, the ratio was as indicated above. Today it is populated by 21,000 Ukrainians, the Polish community totals about 200 persons and there is not a single representative of the Jewish community registered. The architectural patrimony preserved from the previous epochs, because of the economic and political turmoil, is ever more frequently and insistently in a dire need of reconstruction for any further use.

We have set our objectives as follows: rallying the town community around the idea of addressing the described problem with the monuments, supplementing the existing tourist route Along the Paths of Ancient Kremenets with four new facilities and promotion of the route.

Project Contents

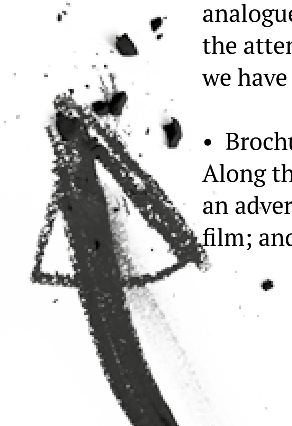
The project has focused on the following heritage sites in the town: Cossack Cemetery, Jewish Cemetery, Natural Monument ‘Trough Spring’ and the Kremenets Stone Mine, Underground Town. Following the project completion, the sights have become open for visiting by the townspeople, guests or tourists alike. All the facilities have been cleaned of waste and cleared of excessive vegetation, provided with information plates, benches for rest, railings in steep climb spots and with signs leading to the new tourist sights. We feel happy that for a year the local residents have maintained the facilities and the adjacent territories in a clean condition.

We have achieved these results by making a few project-related steps:

- Research-to-practice conference Kremenets Mountains Heritage, which was attended by almost 50 contributors. The research results submitted dealt with the urban architecture, tangible or intangible heritage monument protection (for example, the South-Volyn sub-dialect in certain Shumsk District villages) and maintenance of the natural and environmental balance in the contemporary Kremenets Mountains;

- Photo exhibition at the Local History Museum, which has featured pictures of the town taken in the pre-war period juxtaposed with their present-day analogues. This move strongly enabled the attendants to reflect on how much we have lost…;

- Brochures and maps of the route Along the Paths of Ancient Kremenets, an advertising video and a promotional film; and



- Last, but not least, preparation and printing of The Kray informative local history magazine, which has turned out to be a truly massive challenge for our organisation. The magazine's theme, i.e. "Preservation of the Historic and Cultural Sites on the Territory of Ukraine's Natural Reserve Funds," has attracted interest from personnel of 12 national parks of Ukraine, including the Kremenets Mountains National Park, and museum staff, who were contributing their articles. The magazine has also published some works submitted by pupils, who were winners of creative contests. A separate article in the magazine was devoted to the tourist route Along the Paths of Ancient Kremenets, while in her introductory statement to the magazine the chairperson of the Kremenets Environmental League CSO appreciated an important role played by the European Union, ALDA and the CHOICE project in the issues related to conservation of Ukraine's historic, cultural and natural patrimony.

Thus, the town has gained its new tourist sights, which are accessible and open to all those eager to attend. And now the town has received from the Jewish community of France the amount of approximately EUR 100,000 to reconstruct the cemetery stonewall and entrance gate as of the 1930's (according to a photographic picture of that period).

Partner Network and Organisational Growth

While implementing the project, our organisation was developing itself. We felt honoured to realise that the town needed our activity and received numerous opportunities to gain new knowledge (and, importantly, to increase our NGO's membership), while holding training sessions on project activities and fundraising, as well as in course of the social advertisement contest entitled: Renaissance of My Town's History and Culture.

A vital input has been contributed by great many volunteers involved at all the project implementation stages. We have been joined by the local higher educational institutions' students and some residents of Jerelna Street, which happens to accommodate three out of the four project sites. Many other citizens displayed their interest and provided, as much as possible, their assistance; we have made new friends and found like-minded persons, which fact has inspired a higher-level feeling of confidence among our team members.

We have established good relations with the town hall, which has resulted in allocation from the town budget of UAH 30,000 to cover the 10 per cent co-financing requirement. The town mayor and his deputies often visited our volunteer events and even took part in one of them.

Thanks to the CHOICE project, we have gained new friends and found like-minded people in Brody, Starokonstantiniv and Rivne, with whom we communicated on a regular basis, shared our ideas and invited each other to our events.

After a meeting within the CHOICE project framework in Lviv with our colleagues from Belarus, we have succeeded in bringing to life an idea we borrowed from them: holding an artistic plein-air for children I am Painting My Town's History, which was attended by 21 children aged between 4 and 14 years of age. Six works by its participants have provided a basis for the 2017 calendars, which are now distributed among the town guests and tourists, as well as at travel business exhibitions held in Kyiv and Ternopil.

Following the project completion, our activities aimed at heritage preservation and promotion is continued. Thus, thanks to visiting the International East-European Initiative Forum in Lublin, we have found some new friends and become partners of the trans-border project, entitled: Ukraine — Poland — Belarus — 2020, devoted to the topic Border Area Fortresses (participated by Przemyśl, Zamość, Cracow, Zhovkva, Kremenets and Lviv). We are busy developing some new tourist routes: Greenweiss in Ukraine and Along the Paths of Juliusz Słowacki in Kremenets.

Our organisation has become recognisable throughout our region, as well as far away all over Ukraine. Yet, the main thing is that our team has developed a conviction that even a small group of people is capable of achieving a lot, if an objective is properly formulated, i.e. if it is an objective, which is shared by the local community.

DIGITIZED ACTUAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

“Shevchenko’s Grove” Civil Society Organization

Location
Lviv, Ukraine

Implementation period
April 2016 — May 2017

Project coordinator
Yevhen Chervony

Context: Issues Addressed by the Project

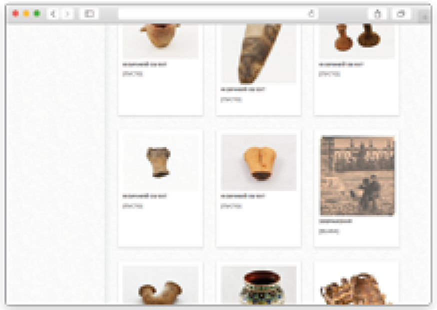
The project, as implies the title, seeks two major objectives: cultural heritage digitalisation and updating. With this goal in mind, we have chosen to concentrate on the museum collections of several cities or towns (Lviv, Melitopil, Kamyanets-Podolskyi and Kremenets), because our organisation is active in the museum business sector, and the museums themselves represent some key players in the area of cultural heritage conservation. The project has provided for inclusion of an activity aimed at involving the two target groups: museum experts engaged in handling, maintaining, studying and representing the museum collections and the general internet audience as cultural heritage stakeholders. For the general internet audience it means being provided with an opportunity of grasping the amount of the available cultural heritage stock and its interconnectedness with it, and of forming the value-based criteria through museum collection institutionalisation, as well as an opportunity to develop the democratisation processes by way of granting an access to the cultural valuables using the digital media and by formation of the publicity principles without an attachment to the physical stay place, via the internet.

Project Contents

Within the project implementation process, we have discovered the need for modifying its implementation strategy, which was conceived at its initial stage, although its topical agenda and the target groups have remained intact. Originally, we intended to hold broader public workshops for the interested employees; however, as we have found out the face to face training and consultations implying an individual approach proved more efficient. At the project start, the museums invited used to decline invitations to participate, as they lacked confidence as to the success of any would-be changes, as well as because of other fears or concerns. Yet, as some pilot database versions appeared, along with examples of changes integrated by other entities, ever more museums seemed to be willing to become part of the digitalisation efforts. The first organisations involved in the digitalisation cooperation framework were the ones who had had knowledge of us and tended to trust us. The Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and the Ukrainian Museum Business Development Centre have formed a standard for an exhibit description and data exchange, thus indirectly encouraging the museum experts to pro-active moves related to the museum business digital component development.

Difficulties were also appearing in our way to involve our partners in the digitalisation exercise. The professional museum milieu is haunted by a number of fears and stereotypes, which are not easy to overcome at all. Firstly, it is a fear that digitalisation is just a matter for some illicit actions related to the collection; although digitalisation does not provide for taking any exhibits out, independent work in the museum depository or anything of the kind. Secondly, the fear was there to present the available collection itself on the internet, because, allegedly, all the stocks will become common knowledge and there will be no shortage of those who would intend to rob the museum, or else it will demotivate the potential visitors from going to the museum. However, the collaboration terms and conditions did not provide for demonstration of all the exhibits, but only those chosen by the museum itself. This is exactly why the particularly valuable and expensive exhibits might not have been presented to the broader public, or, the other way around, they might have been intrigued by the most exciting exhibits to cause their willingness to pay a visit to the museum and to contemplate the original thing. The antithesis to the statement on robbery was served by the fact that, in fact, availability of a digital copy provides evidence that the exhibit is owned by the institution and, based on its image, it is easier to recover it and return to the museum. A digital copy serves as a proof in a potential search for or sale of any misappropriated exhibits. The third fear was exactly provision to a third party (which was represented by an NGO) of an access to the museum deposits, because we could see “what we should not see” or else play the role of a watchdog agency and disclose the fact of a poor exhibit safety situation. This is where the institution managers and deposit custodians saw a threat to themselves, although it was not our goal, when planning the project; on the contrary, we had sought to assist them in demonstration of their best show-pieces and, when the employees themselves did the exhibit selection work, no threats appeared. All the above things have posed the greatest challenge to our organisation, which is not referred to the state-owned, legislative or executive sector, but operates as a non-profit-making organization.

A change in format of the project implementation, which implied a departure from the formation of a single cultural heritage database on a joint platform towards the formation of specific institutions’ individual websites, which institutions are



capable of sharing information and displaying data in a format needed, has provided several opportunities for the digitalisation process optimisation and further development. A decision was made instead of developing an in-house software product to utilise a ready-made tested and flexible product to be developed in the future and maintained by the professional community, while the involved entities themselves will not be responsible for its further maintenance or support. Within the framework of the Currently Central Digitalised Cultural Heritage project, the Providence collection management system has been adopted to meet the needs of the Ukrainian museum environment. The first step was represented by creating a Ukrainian linguistic version for an easier use in the Ukrainian sector. The next step was to formulate the criteria relevant to show-piece description according to the national and international standards, which would enable a prompt information exchange process with the cultural heritage custodian entities and for an internal collection management. In summary, the museum in this respect performs two functions at a time: promotion and access provision, while building simultaneously its own database of the available exhibits. The digital collection management tools will be in the future transferred to be owned by the museums themselves. It will provide them with an opportunity to keep on working on the cultural heritage digitalisation and to replenish and update information all by themselves without our organisation's involvement.

Our organisation Shevchenko's Grove has acted as a consultant and served as an intermediary between the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture with its formal requirement and the museum itself, which was in need of a specific operational decision on the issues pertinent to the digitalised collection management and presentation. This kind of situation clearly demonstrates the role played by such projects as ours, whereby the non-government sector fills in the gap between the institutional competences and the formal government agency postulates, the government and the state being the general titleholder of the cultural patrimony. It will allow us to keep on providing our consulting services to the interested museums or other heritage sector entities also in the future.

Organisational and Partner Network Development

Already now we can observe the positive effects produced by the digitalisation efforts. The interested professionals, upon reviewing their colleagues' collections, try to contact them for joint exhibition and research arrangements. A great number of digitalised and accessible online exhibits help to promote the museum itself and the collection it holds. Placing the data on the Europeana world cultural heritage segregator will be instrumental in engaging both foreign colleagues and visitors in interaction. Adding their digitalised collections on the Europeana will fill the gap of absent Ukrainian cultural heritage segment and will assist in integration into the general European context, because as of today just 3 Ukrainian institutions are represented there.

Our pilot projects (**artgallery.lviv.ua**, **kremenets.com.ua**, **lvivskansen.org** and **melitopol-museum.zp.ua**) have led to motivating also other museums to commence the digitalisation process. It is our ambition that after a full-fledged setting and launch of all the pilot projects an organisational network will be developed to begin the digitalisation work. The general meeting of the CHOICE project members used to discuss a possible involvement of other partners from outside the museum sector in creation of the intangible cultural heritage register. It enables putting in place the existing working principles related to handling the cultural patrimony in the area of digital technologies, upgrading the issue and developing an ontological structure and a skeleton construct pertinent to data administration.

By and large, the CHOICE project has allowed our organisation to develop its contact network and to establish itself as a reliable partner. The digitalised materials will be used in museum and cultural heritage presentations, as interactive platforms at exhibitions, as well as informative interactive monitors intended for tourists.

Digitalisation is a global trend in the cultural heritage sphere and it expands the available leverage of administration, preservation, insight and promotion. We as an entity have gained a valuable experience within the project framework and shall keep on sharing information to meet our common goal: providing an access to the cultural heritage and its updating as a significant manifestation of the human genesis. Today it is particularly important to comprehend that a country's cultural heritage may not belong to one nation or state alone, but makes part of the global culture produced by the entire humanity.

“FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN” LITERARY AND LOCAL HISTORY ROUTES

Poltava Regional Organisation of the Ukrainian National Writers’ Union

Location
Poltava Region, Ukraine

Implementation period
March 2016 — March 2017

Project coordinator
Natalia Kiryachok

КАРТА
Кибинці

Context: Issues Addressed by the Project

The project has been aimed at putting foundations under the literary tourism and creating modern arrangements of exhibits with an involvement on behalf of the local communities in the three Poltava Region districts: Zinkiv, Myrhorod and Hadiach. We have sought to utilise the modern European experience and, jointly with the local communities, to develop and promote some literary travel routes, which feature more diversified events, than just visiting places related to a writer. In order to achieve the goal, we made attempts to consolidate the resources provided by the local authorities, entrepreneurs, creative union representatives, volunteers and civil society organisations.

We have concentrated our work on such historic or cultural heritage facilities as museum houses, museum rooms, memorable places related to the lives and creative work of the prominent Ukrainian writers born in Poltava Region, archives, eyewitnesses’ accounts, as well as on the modern creative rethinking of literary works.

Project Contents

- The project was kick started with some training events intended for the activists, which events were needed to formulate a common vision of the project’s goals and objectives and to introduce to their participants some new activity forms in the sphere of cultural heritage conservation. The training sessions, workshops and seminars have served for the attendants originating from the three districts to obtain new knowledge, as well as to close the ranks and form a team of like-minded persons, who also now remain in a close communication with each other and share their experiences of creating literary and local history travel routes;

- We have updated the writers’ museum exhibit arrangements in full or in part (Elena Pchelka and Lesya Ukrainka at the Hadiach Local History Museum and the Tiutiunnyk Brothers Museum exhibit arrangement in the village of Shylivka), as well as overhauled the buildings with the help provided by the local authorities;

- Each of the project districts launched its creative workshops (regular-basis meetings) aimed at developing the travel routes, which were attended by the NGO representatives, librarians, writers and researchers. With reliance on some unimpeachable scientific facts, the workshops have developed in a creative manner some literary and local history travel routes, which fact has served to attract some very first tourists, and we have received quite a positive feedback on the work done.

By the way, at the beginning of our workshop activities it was not always easy to reach a shared vision of a literary travel route. One of the workshop sessions has failed to come to an agreement how the route sites making part of its infrastructure should look like. The local authority representatives expressed their desire to put some benches at the place, where potentially cultural events could be held. At the same time, the writers and NGO members advanced their opinion on the need for creating a facility to attract more tourists. One of the project achievements in the area of creative space provision was represented by construction of Mykhailo Semenko Pavilion in the village of Kibyntsi. The pavilion serves as a resting spot for the tourists, as well as is underpinned by an artistic concept related to the writer’s name. We have invited some renowned architects, writers and artists to contribute to the development of the pavilion sketches.

Further on, as the work progressed, ever new exhibits appeared and ever new interesting facts from the writers’ lives were coming to the surface, while a part of the research is presented in a virtual exhibit arrangement and has provided a basis for documentary dramas;

- The documentary dramas based on the fellow-countryman writers’ biographic facts represent, beyond any doubt, one of our major achievements. Well-known playwrights and actors were invited to write and stage them. The shows have been attended by approximately three hundred people; we have received some encouraging feedback from the spectators, as well as conducted a round of discussions after every show. It is important to note that the show casts included prominent actors and the local residents alike;

- Ten videos have also been recorded to focus on the biographies and creative work of the fellow-countryman writers. The videos are characterised by a high quality level and have been presented at the travel routes, because video viewings represent a route component. The video recordings included the local historians, museum staff and university teachers; and

- Jointly with the workshop attendants, we have integrated in our work such a form of work as the Talking Cafe. The form provides an opportunity to communicate in an informal environment and learn more on the personalities related to Poltava Region, as well as to meet contemporary authors. We expect these events to become a part of the travel routes and attract ever more tourists.

Lessons Learned

We have seen the major problems and tried to address them all along the project duration: the museum personnel lack knowledge on how to attracts tourists and interface with the public; the community members are in need of re-energising the cultural life and creating a platform for educational events; activists need an opportunity for personal fulfilment; the local authorities have made it a point to improve their districts' appearance and the travel business infrastructure; and the guests are in need of creating for them some opportunities to learn about their fellow-countrymen's heritage at the places, which are closely related to them.

During a visit paid to the Polish NGOs active in the sphere of tourism and cultural heritage conservation we have found new partners, who cherish similar values and are open to cooperation. As is exemplified by individual facilities, in particular, the Kinokońkret coffee house, we saw for ourselves how much an artistic transfiguration of a cultural space means along with a detailed concept elaboration from the very start and a subsequent compliance with such a concept. Regretfully enough, in the Ukrainian realities we quite often come to a halt after asking the question 'How can it be done?' Whereas the main issue is what we want to do and how it is going to work and develop. We have visited some organisations, which are active in the rural areas, in order to have an opportunity to apply what we saw in our practical work.

Organisational and Partner Network Development

Now the literary tourism in the region is on a rise. The events staged by museums or libraries are featured by a modern format and consolidate their communities.

We have succeeded in rallying the local communities around the literary heritage as a shared value for the cultural life, and the activities conducted by the local sponsors and a large number of volunteers involved serve to confirm the fact. The local administrations have pro-actively engaged in the project-related events, the local Department of Culture representatives have provided their support in presenting the travel routes, while the business community representatives have granted their financial support to the initiatives appearing in course of the project implementation. For instance, Zinkiv District local authorities and business people have financed the signs and information plates installed along the travel route, entitled: Grigory and Hryhor Tiutiunnyks — Along the Roads of Their Lives and Creative Work. Moreover, the Zinkiv Administration had committed itself to financing the emigrant writers' museum, which allowed us to expand this literary and local history travel route. Yet, the need arose for creating in this location one more Workshop. When developing the project, we assumed that we would work with the materials related to the Tiutiunnyk brothers, only, but were faced with the fact that we began working with a few more names of our fellow-countryman writers.

We were joined by some activists representing other districts, which have their memorable sites dedicated to fellow-countryman writers, too. Already now we provide them with guidance and consultations and jointly prepare projects aimed at conservation of the regional cultural heritage. The project team has created the website **www.litmarshrut.ltava.org** as a platform for the literary tourism business development in our region.

We have also developed a new project vision and its possible continuation. We have begun training guides from among the local historians to work on the developed travel routes. We have plans underway to train a core actor troupe and buy their costumes for the theatrical sightseeing tours, which have been particularly highly estimated by the visiting tourists.

RIVNE REGION'S WOODEN CHURCH ARCHITECTURE: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

"Institute of Ukrainian Modernism" Civil Society Organization

Location
City of Rivne and Rivne Region, Ukraine

Implementation period
April 2016 — March 2017

Project coordinators
Petro Rychkiv, Natalia Lushnikova

Context: The Issue Addressed by the Project

The project has been dedicated to conservation of the wooden church building heritage created in our region between the 18th and the first third of the 20th century. Currently, Rivne Region has among its sacral architecture facilities 36 national significance monuments and 124 local significance ones. However, this is far from a complete list of the wooden churches, which still persist in the region. Apart from the threat of a natural time-related destruction, the vital point is that all of these facilities are being used by religious communities, which, regretfully enough, quite frequently practise repair or maintenance operations with no appropriate professional guidance and supervision. The state services entrusted with cultural heritage preservation fail to perform properly their functions. All of these factors result in a number of cases, when authentic works of the popular sacral architecture are lost, and not infrequently these losses are irretrievable.

This is why the project objectives were: research, protection and promotion of the wooden church heritage of Rivne Region, bringing the issue in a broader public focus and an appeal for a careful attitude to such sites. At the same time, the implementers set for themselves some personal professional goals related to exploring the patrimony and use of the research results in their scientific and educational work.

Project Contents

- The purpose-oriented expeditions and chamber studies have contributed to an additional identification and examination of more than 80 wooden churches, which are of a historic and cultural interest. More than 30 facilities among them display a high historic or cultural value and quite deserve the status of architectural monuments;

- A critical element of the project success was related to several topical artistic contests held: contest of children's drawings Wooden Wonder, which featured about 200 works submitted by 184 children from all over the region, photographic competition Instagram Churches (over 50 works) and contest of students' wooden church designs to accommodate 100 parishioners;

- We have held several outreach seminars for clergy representatives (their audience totalling 100 priests) and developed materials on the agenda and approaches relevant to church conservation, which were distributed among the priests at the seminars. The Institute of Ukrainian Modernism members have prepared an online map of the regional wooden churches (accessible at: goo.gl/gvtDEX), which contains information on more than 100 churches and will be updated as and when new information appears;

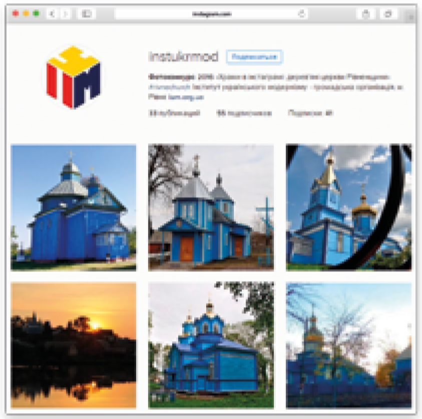
- A systematised catalogue, which deals with the aggregate mass of the Rivne Region wooden sacral architecture, will have, in our opinion, the most amplitudinous and long-term effect. We have also succeeded in initiating inclusion on the register of local significance monuments of five more wooden churches.

For the first time in the region and, perhaps, on the national scale, we have organised a dialogue among the clergy, local authorities' representatives and scholars on the issues related to preserving the wooden churches' authenticity; major recommendations have been drafted and articulated; and the legal, architectural, artistic and structural aspects of church conservation and restoration have been reviewed; and

- The issues related to church conservation have become a major topic for discussion at the meetings of the Rivne Region Coordination Council for Cultural Heritage Protection set up under the auspices of the Regional Administration in July 2016. It includes Petro Rychkiv, Director of the Institute of Ukrainian Modernism and Professor of the Department of Architecture and Environmental Design at the National University of Water and Natural Resource Management and Professor Olha Mykhailyshyn, Doctor of Architecture, Chair of the same Department and Deputy Director of the Institute of Ukrainian Modernism.

Challenges Encountered by Us

The dialogue conducted with the clergy representatives, as was to be expected, proved to be the most challenging part of the project. Nonetheless, we have succeeded in establishing relations with the dioceses and the wooden churches' senior priests. The negative factor was the project negation by certain



clergy representatives (in particular, by the Sarny diocese of the Moscow Patriarchy's Ukrainian Orthodox Church). To evade a confrontation between representatives of the different patriarchies' dioceses, we had to hold separate seminars (one joint seminar had been initially scheduled) for the priests belonging to the Kyiv and Moscow Patriarchies.

Further work has to be conducted with the clergy representatives with some real support and regulation granted from the state administration agencies, search for common ground among different target groups and generalisation of the situation in respect of the issue, and, primarily, when performing repair and maintenance operations.

When preparing the catalogue, a problematic aspect encountered during our expeditions was the criminogenic situation in the northern parts of the region due to an illegal amber mining business and an unsatisfactory condition of the highway infrastructure in the area.

Students have demonstrated a poor activity in preparing wooden church designs, which has become for us an unexpected circumstance.

However, against all odds, within the process of our operations we have succeeded in enhancing our relations with our traditional partners (the National University of Water and Natural Resource Management and the Rivne Region Local History Museum), as well as in extending our scientific links with the Rivne and Volyn Region colleagues and in establishing some international contacts. As follows from a report delivered by Professor Petro A. Rychkiv, Director of the Institute of Ukrainian Modernism at the 3rd International Scientific Conference Colour-Culture-Science (Cracow, Poland, 23–24 November 2016), the interest to the agenda does not exist in Ukraine alone.

Summing-up

And so the project has provided some valuable information on the current condition of the wooden churches in the region, enriched us with new contacts and attracted attention to the theme from various socially active groups of the public. The project progress and outcomes have been reflected in mass media and are used in their educational and research activities by all the members of the Institute of Ukrainian Modernism.

We do believe that the major objectives set have been achieved. For us the critically vital target audience was represented by the Orthodox clergy representatives active at the wooden churches as direct customers and users of the wooden sacral building heritage. Following the results of our concerted efforts, both the public and the clergy have perceived the project in a positive way.

As the project-related events were implemented, the Institute of Ukrainian Modernism has methodically built its self-motivated and creative relations within the framework of an implementer team. These were mainly our organisation's members, who have scientific and organisational experiences. An essential role was also played by an active support provided by the project's interested partners, such as structural subdivisions of the Regional State Administration which are responsible for work among the target groups: Department for Construction and Architecture, Directorate for Education and Science, and Directorate for Culture and Tourism. A real support in preparation for our events has been provided by the diocesan administrations of the Orthodox confession belonging to the two Patriarchies, by the National University of Water and Natural Resource Management (the region's largest higher educational establishment and the only one, which trains architects), by the Rivne Region Local History Museum, various civil society organisations (Rivne Region Organisation of the National Artists' Union of Ukraine and Rivne Region Organisation of the Ukrainian Designers' Union), individual representatives of the creative public (artists, photographic artists or architects), mass media representatives, etc.

We see as a possible and promising continuation of the project the move to explore the wooden sacral architecture at Volyn Region, which is of an equally great public interest and has a commeasurable researcher potential.

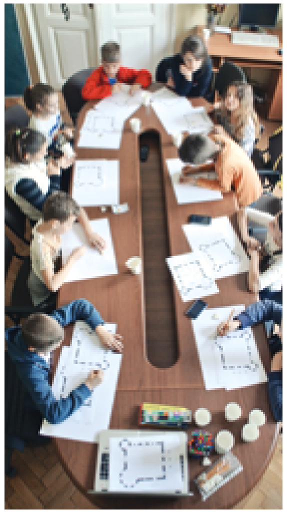
WE ARE THE CITY

“LIK” Association for Promotion of Culture and Education

Location
Uzhgorod, Ukraine

Implementation period
April 2016 —
May 2017

Project coordinator
Tetiana Smryha



Context:
Issues Addressed by the Project

Any citizen is only too well aware that protection of the historic and cultural heritage is an area (at least, one would think so) of a narrow professional interest, but extremely a high-profile one in terms of the conflict risks involved. To be more exact, this is how it can be rightly perceived thanks to the rhetoric and communication style of the activists, who are known by their tedious and gibberish lawsuits, histories of judicial or administrative proceedings, memoranda and petitions. This is why one of the objectives behind our project was to use, when speaking about the heritage, an easy and intelligible language, which is clear to everybody, in order to reach the hearts and minds of every resident, who quite often is remote from the theme of cultural patrimony conservation.

By the way, there is a lot to talk about. The situation around Uzhgorod’s historic centre is a critical one. The city is promptly losing its face, while the real efforts made by the activists within the latest 10 years look no better than an attempt to patch up one’s makeup during a thunderstorm. The cultural heritage issue is seen by us as a bilateral one: there is no good will one behalf of the authorities, neither there is any understanding of it on behalf of the public. This is why the project consists of two big and interconnected blocks: the institutional one (working with the civil servants and competent authorities) and the educational one (mass-scale education among the residents of different ages and work with the public opinion through the mass media channels).

Project Contents

In the institutional block:

- Thanks to the permanent-basis consultations with lawyers and experts from other cities and towns on cultural heritage protection, we became aware of the fact how imperfect our national legislation in this sphere is. But also another thing: in order to change the situation drastically, one needs the will of the local authorities and willingness of specific persons. An ideal situation for a city or town is, when the business interests of the “ruling elite” representatives coincide with the city or town’s interests, with its development and conservation of the cultural heritage sites;

- Beside a large number of personal meetings, we have taken part on a regular basis in the working groups related to the cultural heritage agenda and all the contiguous issues and organised several round tables, which combined presentations, best practices and animated communication with representatives of other cities and towns. One of the crucial round table events featuring the local authority representatives’ participation was used to discuss how to set up within the local authorities an effective mechanism for the protection of the cultural heritage sites, while another one was entitled How to make money out of cultural heritage;

- Jointly with other NGOs and activists we have organised an international seminar Old Town: Modern Development Strategy, following the results of which our activists could be directly involved in the preparation process for the City Strategy development;

- Work in the social media: our activists have written more than 20 posts on various issues of cultural heritage for the Uzhgorod group (20,037 members in June 2017). Many of them were efficient. For example, following the posts on the problems related to facade repairs in the central part of the city, on polypropylene foam insulation of an individual apartment situated in a building constructed in the functionalism style, illegal replacement of old wooden window frames with new plastic ones in the downtown part of the city et al., the issues have been addressed, sometimes in a high-profile way for the local media environment. We have had an additional meeting with the civil servants to clarify provisions of the Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage and to reach an agreement on developing systemic approaches to window and door replacement in the historic part of the city; and

- We have done some work to amend the Regulation on Signs in the City of Uzhgorod. All the alterations have been successfully approved by an Uzhgorod City Council session. After a conflict situation around a terrace along the central pedestrian only street Corso, we are developing amendments to the Regulation on Terraces and a new Regulation on the Authority Entrusted with Cultural Heritage Protection. We collaborate on a permanent basis with the representatives of the City Council, Executive Committee and their profile directorates or departments on the issues related to cultural heritage protection by trying to influence decisions made on tactical, as well as strategic problems.

In the educational block we have pursued an objective to modify our citizens’ attitude to the cultural patrimony. Wasteland begins in our minds, and it is exactly there that creation begins, too.

- An Uzhgorodian’a School has become the most interesting, promising and attractive event. Having comprehended all the futility of the current activities conducted by the activists, we have changed our tactics. No, Old Uzhgorod cannot be redeemed, but we are capable of bringing up a new generation of citizens, who just in 20 years or so will form the city environment, and, we would love to believe, will do so with affection and respect of its history and a rational approach to its current needs.

To captivate children's attention with sophisticated topics of architecture or urban planning, we have determined the basic principles for the training sessions: the form of a game, voluntary participation and respect to every participant. When testing some of our creative ideas or approaches to information delivery on various groups of children, we came to a conclusion that we were short of competences, although the external result was seemingly excellent. The kids and their parents were enthusiastic about the sessions and insisted on their continuation, whereas we well understood that that a set of segmentary data provided to the children through games and plays was not our ambition at all. One more challenge was that pedagogues have little knack for architecture or urban planning, while architects are unable of handling groups of children or forming an educational product;

- This is why we invited some specialists, who for many a year held the Children's Architecture School in Kharkiv and represent the Critical Thinking CSO headed by Bohdan Volynskyi. They have conducted in Uzhgorod a magnificent 2-day workshop. We have discussed our needs and, as a result, the Children's Architecture School people prepared a holistic course made up of 10 sessions for children aged between 8 and 14 years. The relevant Guidance Manual contains a detailed description of every session, supplementary materials and even a model diploma to be presented to a student completing the course. The course has been developed so that it can be led even by a person who is not a professional architect, for example, by a school teacher;

- We have held some guidance seminars for school teachers and were inspired by the fact that many participants seemed to be sincerely interested in the project. A few schools have invited us to conduct our sessions in autumn, while others were going to conduct them all by themselves;

- Street exhibitions. Uzhgorod is Ukraine's only city with whole surviving modernist neighbourhoods dating back to the 1930's, including buildings designed by renowned European architects, original planning, landscape gardening, paving block design and even interior details. This is why our first exhibition within the project framework was entitled Uzhgorod Inter-War Period (1919–1939). An open-space exhibition, which is accessible for several months, is a guarantee of interest for passers-by and publicity. The feedback I remember the best was as follows: Look, this is my house, is it valuable, too?

- Educational materials. When working on the project website we used to argue a lot how to make it relevant and valuable for as many city residents as possible for a long span of time. In this way we developed an idea to create an interactive map of Uzhgorod's architectural history **uzh.city**. Its basis was provided by the Uzhgorod modernism map, which we have also printed within the project framework.

The map contains data on the buildings in Uzhgorod's historic part: year of construction, architect, architectural style, as well as a detailed article, if ready by the period of time in question. Uzhgorod's architectural map is of a special value for the city, because no profound research into the architectural heritage has been carried out here so far, and most buildings even lack their certificates. We have plans underway to provide on the map some detailed information on every historic building.

Summing-up

Due to our participation in the CHOICE project, we have re-thought our activist tactics and strategy, while the available funding has streamlined our activities to make them more concentrated and systemic.

The institutional block has required from us massive efforts, but its results turned to be much more modest than we would like to have had. Probably, we have set for ourselves the objectives, which proved to be overly ambitious. It is hard to change anything faced by a bulky and cohesive system, which pursues a different set of objectives.

Yet, the educational block was very successful. Dozens of publications on the local and national news websites, interviews and live coverage on TV and radio and hundreds of likes and reposts on social media serve to confirm it. It has become voguish to write and speak about cultural heritage preservation. We are glad that the reason for it has been provided by other people's work, as well as by our efforts. We are also glad that during a strategic session (capacity-building event within the project framework) we have succeeded in bringing together all the cultural organisations and activists, many of whom share our values and help us in our projects, something we appreciate very much.

During the year our project We Are the City lasted, our team experienced all kinds of things. And it has become stronger. Certainly, it is not possible to change a critical situation within a year. However, now we are sure that as a part of the civil society we are in a position to influence it. Probably, we shall not succeed in preserving the Old Town, but we shall for sure succeed in preserving its memories and information.

CHOICE TEACHES TO BE FAMOUS

“Starokostiantyniv Non-Indifferent” Civil Society Organization

Location
Starokostiantyniv

Implementation period
April 2016 — April 2017

Project coordinator
Serhiy Khudyi

Context

The town of Starokostiantyniv is a small regional center in the Khmelnytskyi Region, Ukraine. However, despite its small size, the town has a big history, to popularize which among a maximally considerable number of people was the initial task of our public organization’s participation in CHOICE.

The historical highlight of the town is Kanstancin Astrozski's Castle, the outstanding figure in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Ukraine was part of it) in the 16th century. With the help of this outstanding historical and architectural monument, we planned to change local residents’ attitude to their own cultural heritage and public work as such, as well as to receive personal experience of project management and to study best practices of other public organizations in the country and abroad.

Possibly, we overestimated our possibilities as our basic project was not selected, which made us reflect on its more detailed study. However, CHOICE gave us a chance to work on our organizational potential, and we used this possibility to the full!

What CHOICE Has Given and How it is Remembered in Starokostiantyniv

However, during CHOICE’s consulting and educational support, we did not stop our project activity — we continued our work aimed at actualizing the Castle as a symbol of the town and a resource of its cultural development and positioning. The organizational development program we worked out together with the adviser Yulia Golodnikova helped us much to correct some approaches chosen before.

We began with basic management in the public sector and qualitatively changed our perceptions of organizational structures and management models, the importance of corporate culture and its basic elements; for the first time we systematically studied cultural policy methods and the way they are implemented (or not) in Ukraine. We had discussions about threats of “sharovarshchina” (the Soviet understanding of culture as an unequivocally archaic sphere of people’s life) and how culture can become an inoculation against Russia’s propaganda. Also, we learned the general principles of how to form historical memory and innovative techniques of how to attract society to patriotic projects. During the class called “Symbolical space of a town from imperial times to the present day: socio-cultural changes (memory and a monument; toponymy of town streets)”, we outlined a field of problems concerning the decommunization of Starokostiantyniv and designated the role of public initiatives in the popularization of local cultural heritage.

Socio-cultural projects marketing became a separate topic. We began conceptualizing our niche in the sector of public and cultural work and spent a lot of time to the planning of the positioning of our organization and the strategy of communication work with different partners.

An adjacent topic was the strategy of informational work (and everything connected to PR) and campaigns of civic participation. We became aware of methods of how to lobby the community’s interests and to understand advocacy campaigns as a method of achieving our purposes. Also, we studied the methodology of carrying out public hearings and how to beneficially use public relations of power, sponsors, and political parties.

We developed several documents that help us build all our activity consistently: the strategic plan for three years and fundraising and communication strategies that are published in the form of brochures and are accessible to our colleagues and adherents in the town.

Risks management methods and how to decrease their possible negative consequences are still a difficult and ambiguous zone for us. Some big sets of daily work (such as the monitoring of cultural projects and corresponding cases from foreign experience) meanwhile remain uncovered.

We are proud very much of the prepared and implemented trainings and involved experts:

- Yulia Zabaldina — expert in strategic planning, expert in marketing, candidate of economic sciences, senior lecturer of the Tourism and Recreation Department of Kyiv National Trade and Economic University, participant of working groups to create the strategy of tourism development and the concept of the tourism development program in Ukraine;

- Yulia Golodnikova — expert in PR communications, trainer of organizational development, social psychologist, curator of educational and cultural projects and public organization programs of the Informational-Research Center “Integration and Development”;

- Oksana Levkova — chairperson of the board of the all-Ukrainian public organization “Do not be indifferent!”, member of the public council at the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine within the scope of the program “Culture Weapons” and in the same place — the coordination council concerning the use of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of public life of the country, expert of the EU project “Cultural Code of the Eastern Partnership”.

Effects

All educational meetings benefited not only us, but also invited adherents from the local community and our partner relations with them. At the local level, we managed to present ourselves as active players, to interest and convince people of the necessity of some cultural transformations to be implemented by forces of civil society. We also considerably raised our social capital, having managed to involve new members in our team and to draw attention of power and business.

E.g. some representatives of business became one of the parties who actively helped our work — they shared their vision of problems and offered their initiatives. Local deputies and other representatives of power participated in our actions/events. Even the departments of culture of the town and regional administrations were active and prepared several applications to participate in other projects similar to ours.

However, the contacts we initiated with the authorities were not fruitful at once. At first sight, we did not change their passive position, but then in the cultural life of our town several big initiatives were launched. As a result of one of them, the town managed to carry out a big medieval festival in August 2017. Now we think of the necessity to keep studying methods of interaction with stakeholders.

Thanks to the project, it was possible to build contacts with many colleagues from Belarus, Moldova, and Armenia. We have established partner relations with the public organizations “Kremenets Environmental League”, “Krai”, “Institute of Ukrainian Modernism”, “Touristic Association of Ukraine”, “Participants of the Antiterrorist Operation from the town of Starokostiantyniv”, the informational-research center “Integration and Development” and the Cultural Management Center.

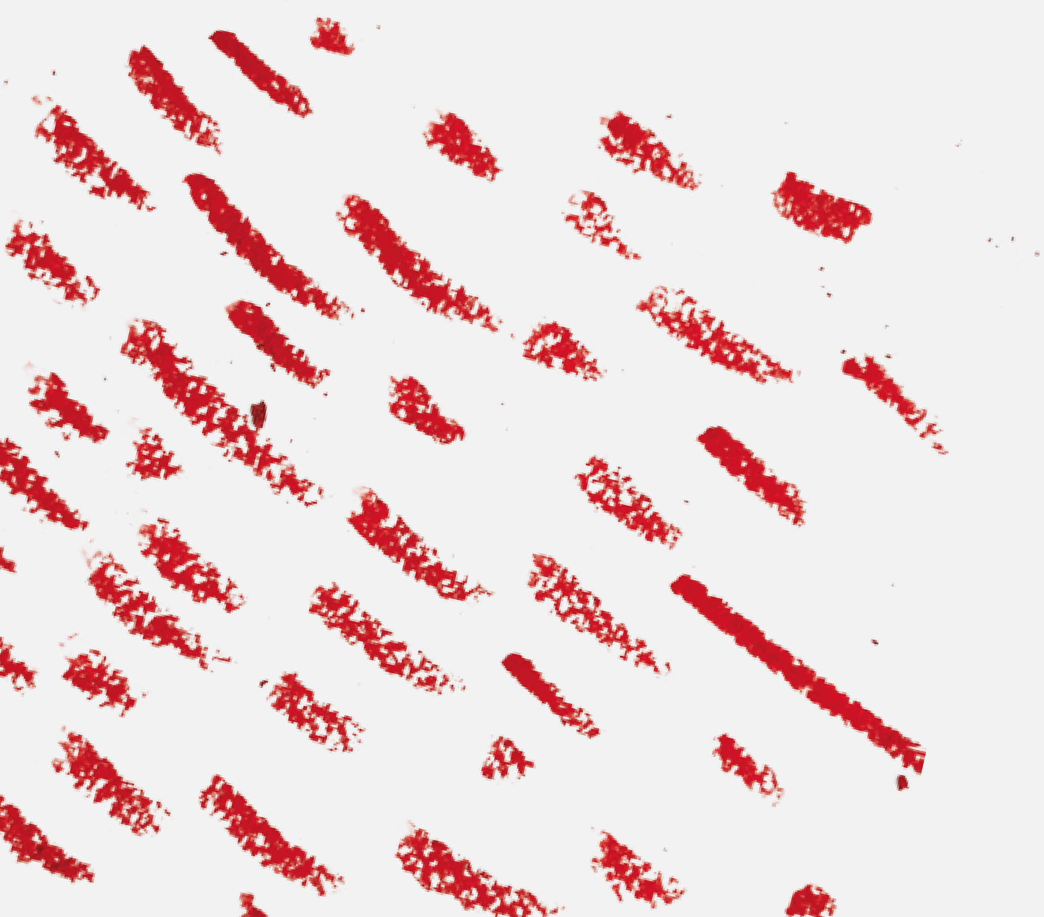
The seminars within the framework of CHOICE in Lviv and Chisinau were very useful — they allowed us to get acquainted and to share experience with many other participants. Constant discussions inside the organization have taught us to seek for a general point of view.

As a whole, such a long enough, educational and communicational program with external professionals has given us huge confidence in the correctness of our organization’s actions and pleasure from personal acquaintance with such a big number of people who understand the role of culture in society’s positive transformations at all levels. Using these supporting resources, we are ready to widen a range of our achievements in new, more essential projects.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

REFLECTIONS OF THE CHOICE PROJECT ORGANIZERS

While the work with cultural heritage is important, the main objective of the CHOICE project is to develop civil society organizations that deal with this topic.



These organizations are aimed at solving step by step, project by project a whole complex of problems described in the “Heritage” chapter, which requires serious intellectual, human capital and adequate organizational forms.

Here, it is necessary to mark that the environment specificity in the project’s countries is characterized by a number of negative factors that affect to some extent the efficiency of civil society organizations’ activity. The organizations that work with questions of culture and historical-cultural heritage have a rather weak level of social acknowledgment and social capital — in many respects because of a high risk of conflicts in this field of activity. The available resources to develop the project activity of such organizations inside the countries are very limited. Target groups are most often insolvent (in general, the majority of such organizations work with different and changing social groups, depending on specificities of projects or public campaigns); there are difficulties with the finding of partners and the forming of cooperation with them; budgetary funds, as a rule, are inaccessible. As a result, projects depend to a considerable degree on international donors’ external support. At the same time, international support to projects aimed at preserving and developing objects of heritage is very seldom allotted through channels of civil society.

> The cultural heritage sphere demands sooner or later from organizations to reach the level of communication with those who make decisions, as well as to influence local or national policies. At the beginning of the CHOICE project, we observed a quite low or technical (more often — without attempts to come to the level of influencing policies) level of interaction with other stakeholders — authorities, business community, mass media, and other similar organizations.

However, there have been some positive factors of the environment for the development of the organizations in this sphere, too. It is especially important that in all four countries the public have paid much attention to the topic and problems of national identity, particularly in the light of the recent acute regional conflicts, and that various public institutions have got interested in projects and events/actions in the field of historical and cultural heritage, i.e. the organizations now have more possibilities to cover wider audiences and to receive public support.

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF ORGANIZATIONS

At the initial stage of the project, the most of organizations selected to participate in the CHOICE project had their Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) carried out by an external expert. For the CHOICE team, the OCA served as additional research of needs of the sector, while the participants had a chance to evaluate critically their own organizational structure and efficiency.

In Belarus, assessors used a special methodology and an evaluation tool of IMACON[1] projects developed earlier for civil society organizations of our region and proposed them to assessors from other countries of the CHOICE project.

Assessors visited each local organization and had talks with its management, volunteers, and potential basic team of a future project.

During the evaluation, the following questions were discussed: the organizational structure of an initiative or an organization, the practice of managing projects and strategic planning, the condition of financial management and fundraising; PR and communication; existing partner relations, participation in professional networks, attraction of volunteers.

Materials of these meetings made it possible to understand the current state of affairs in these organizations, to find out their human potential, and to understand the problems faced by these organizations of the cultural sphere.

What was this state of affairs prior to the beginning of the project? The following basic problems in management and organizational development were noticed:

- Many organizations — CHOICE participants were actual or potential representatives of creative industries. They had rather an amorphous organizational structure, being communities or temporary creative teams that gather for this or that creative project.

Another special form of the organizations-participants was professional associations that unite people aimed at, first of all, preserving heritage.

Many organizations were small local initiatives, without any previous experience of implementing projects and receiving any international financing.

- For the organizations, the basic motivation of their participation in the CHOICE program was a possibility to implement projects in the sphere of their interest; the prospect of their own development was not considered by them as a possible effect. Thus, in their projects, they were more interested in a creative process, instead of results of their efforts.

In other cases, the organizations wanted to make some concrete product of activity that depended directly on them (e.g. to prepare information materials concerning this or that object of heritages), but paid not enough attention to the process itself and especially to the involving of other stakeholders and local communities, without which essential changes in the field of revitalizing cultural heritage in the long run are impossible. It attests want of a holistic and system approach to questions of heritage and its place in the life of local communities, the absence of tradition/culture of peer-to-peer partnership, excessive competition (frequently not constructive) between non-governmental organizations and local authorities.

- Questions of management and activity planning in such organizations are traditionally in the zone of minor attention. In such organizations, as a rule, there are no staff able to rather professionally carry out project activity, to manage finances, other people, to build external contacts systematically, etc.

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[1] S. V. Gotin, U. U. Vialicka. Model IMACON: evaluation of project design, monitoring, organizational development. — Vilnius: UAB "Petro Ofsetas", 2013

- There are no developed organizational procedures and systems of decision-making; the organizations are often ruled by one leader. A change of the leader\ head often leads to the stagnation or even collapse (temporary or constant) of their activity. There is usually a club form of organization, a bit anarchical management style, as well as a high degree of influence of personal relations between the involved people on the organization's activity.

- The organizations of this sphere often have an objective internal contradiction between "creative" and "management" approaches. The atmosphere in an organizations and its efficiency depend on the way this contradiction is solved.

- It was possible to note a rather weak vision of representatives of the organizations and initiatives of the future of their activity further than outside of their current tasks. They were not willing to enter any activity at the policy level, did not want to interact with other organizations and to build any joint agenda with them.

- Conformism is quite widespread: they look very technically at donor structures (as if at an investor or sponsor), not especially caring of their purposes and interests.

- Unlike quite tangible "products" of an organization, effects and changes thanks to its activity sometimes have an unpredictable and uncontrollable character; sustainability and repeatability of results is problematic.

On the basis of the first diagnostics, we planned our following actions, namely — consultations on organizational development, actions/events on organizational changes (strategic sessions, solutions of problem situations, partners' visits, etc.), support to creative projects of CHOICE participants, as well as developed the contents of international workshops, monitoring and club meetings, public discussions, and an international forum.

WHAT HAS CHANGED THANKS TO PARTICIPATION IN THE CHOICE PROGRAM

Here, it is possible to speak about the general for all the countries effects and about the specificity of growth, characteristic for each separate country. The specificity of Belarus, for example, has revealed such a result as the organization registration (in various legal forms, in Belarus, within the framework of CHOICE, three initiatives did receive their official registration, and it required really serious efforts).

As for the general for all the countries effects — according to evaluations of the participants themselves and the objective data, we can say that almost all organizations have become stronger in a considerable or very considerable degree.

To substantiate this statement, we can say the following:

1. The organizations have improved their skills in project management as they were compelled to reform one way or another their management system in order to implement projects. As a result, their work has become more effective: more things began to be done by a smaller number of people. In some organizations, there appeared an accurate structure, purposes became clear, and values were determined. It is necessary to specially mark the effect of projects for the development of volunteering in organizations and communities.

A sign that the organizations are developing is conflicts accompanying this process. Within the framework of the program, we have observed conflicts of growth inside the organizations, including the fact that some people have left the organizations (because of their different targets and values) and new collectives have appeared. There were also cases of conflicts with stakeholders of local projects — local authorities, church organizations, as well as a part of a community — basically due to political or axiological bases. If they were solved, these conflicts allowed the organizations to find a new vector of development, to grow, to gain experience, and to implement projects in a more viable and sometimes innovative kind. In some cases, conflicts were left without being solved. In this case, there was no visible growth of an organization, although creative projects were carried out.

Almost all the organizations have used the project within the framework of CHOICE to begin more systematic activities and continued their work on the chosen topic after the termination of their local projects.

2. The organizations — CHOICE participants have strengthened their resource base; some of them have bought the necessary office equipment they will keep using. Many organizations have had successful additional fundraising or transferred to more sustainable models of work, having found out solvent demand for their products. Many participants of the project from Ukraine and Moldova have learned to involve in projects local financing, local business, and in some cases — means from the local budget. In a number of projects, we observed the start of new practices (crowdfunding/crowdsourcing, volunteering, pro-active practices of work).

3. In spite of the fact that the most desirable result of the project was to receive the knowledge and skills of organizing situations of political dialogue and to carry out functions of civil control in the heritage sphere, only several organizations have marked it as their full-fledged achievement. Prior to the beginning of the project, the majority of organizations — CHOICE participants did not basically consider their influence on public politics as their field of activity and in the course of the project implementation they improved their positions in this direction only to a certain degree. In order to reach some serious political level, local organizations need more time and efforts. Still, the project, obviously, was a very good base to continue this work in the future and to create corresponding networks and coalitions. Many organizations have received their first serious experience of participating in the policy concerning heritage in the form of negotiations and consultations with representatives of local authorities. They began to understand better how to use cultural heritage for the development of their towns and that the correct use can help them to preserve it better. It is especially necessary to mention the received practical experience and skills to overcome and to solve local conflicts that are inevitable and integral part of the work with cultural-historical heritage.

4. The organizations' potential of participating in policy has grown thanks to the building of contacts and partner connections. The spectrum of organizations, which are mentioned as recently gained partners, is very wide and far beyond the actually four countries of the Eastern Partnership that were the basic partners in this project. These are partnerships with other organizations within the framework of CHOICE, with other civil society organizations, cooperation with business structures, interaction with state structures and local authorities. The overwhelming majority of CHOICE participants have marked the development of their international contacts both inside the CHOICE network and with organizations and professionals from the EU countries.

The CHOICE participants have formed an informal network, through which they have continued to share experiences and ideas, to discuss joint initiatives.

5. Regular contacts and acquisition of experience of teamwork with other professionals from the sphere of culture or other fields of activity can be considered successful. The overwhelming majority of the organizations have noticed in their reports and polls that they managed to achieve it thanks to CHOICE. The assistance of experts, including those from other countries, has helped the organizations to make projects at a much higher professional level. Interdisciplinary and cross-sector projects (for example, on digitalization) would not be possible without such cooperation.

We can mention at least three types of new partners: other organizations-participants of the CHOICE project (both inside the country and the region), a new circle of stakeholders and partners of the organization itself, which appeared as a reaction to better project activities and innovative products, and consultants, trainers, technologists, designers, IT experts, even philosophers whose competences were claimed by the organizations.

6. One more obvious result is the improvement of the external positioning of the majority of the organizations, the improvement of their image, and the strengthening of relations with target groups. The organizations connect this success in a greater degree with their projects rather than with educational and consulting actions/events. Almost all organizations-participants if have not created, then have considerably improved their web-sites. The attendance of these sites has grown; partnerships with TV and radio stations, the press have been established. The organizations became more recognized in their cities thanks to campaigns in the mass media and active work with local residents. There is a growth of a number of publications, mentions in the mass media, including the national level, as well as proposals of local administrations to cooperate or to provide expertise; high interest in social networks, recognition in local areas.

7. Practically all organizations now comprehend the importance of their work. In many respects, it happened thanks to the visible and vivid product of the project activity and the appearance of preconditions for bigger sustainability of project results. Many organizations have said that they have made within the framework of the CHOICE one of their best projects.

8. It is necessary to mark people's considerable personal development as a result of their participation in the CHOICE project. Participants of the project say how strongly the project has influenced them personally and mark that they have received big competences in the field of heritage and culture, have received a better understanding of the device of the organization and ways of its development, have expanded their own circle of contacts and connections, have raised their self-concept and become more self-confident, and some people have become or improved as leaders/heads. They received an opportunity to implement an important for them creative idea and as a result — motivation to new actions and creative projects, being inspired by the idea of preserving historical and cultural heritage. Some participants managed to use the projects to increase their competences in fields of activity that were new to them (IT technology, PR and communication, financial management, etc.).

9. At last, already now we can see some effects the CHOICE project has caused at the level of the community of civil society organizations in the four countries and in the region as a whole.

First of all, CHOICE has given a chance to include in the actual work aimed at preserving cultural heritage small organizations from regions which mission is to support the development of culture, but which had no possibility before to implement such projects. The help of highly skilled international experts and participation in project actions gave these organizations a new understanding of the contents of cultural heritage, as well as tools and concepts that are necessary for the work in this sphere.

Having received a powerful impulse in their development thanks to the project, a number of the organizations have joined the communication with other actors, with professionals from the sphere of cultural heritage. Intensive communication at international thematic seminars, other regular meetings, and mutual aid have helped to consolidate the community of the organizations in this sector of activity and have brought them to the necessity of working out a general program of actions. CHOICE participants, as well as the program as a whole, began to be positioned more actively on platforms for cultural actors in their countries and showed their readiness to advance their achievements and interests at the international (first of all — regional) level.

What further possible steps and recommendations for the future do we see for the development of the potential of the organizations in the sphere of heritage?

On the basis of reflections on the received experiences and stories of changes received during the two-year existence of the CHOICE program, it is necessary to develop a new set of educational services and communicative practices. The organizations need long-term and systematic consultations on how to advance their activity and to build relations with the public.

> A challenge for everybody and, probably, a uniting task is systematized and coordinated work with the available potential resources for projects in the field of culture and cultural heritage.

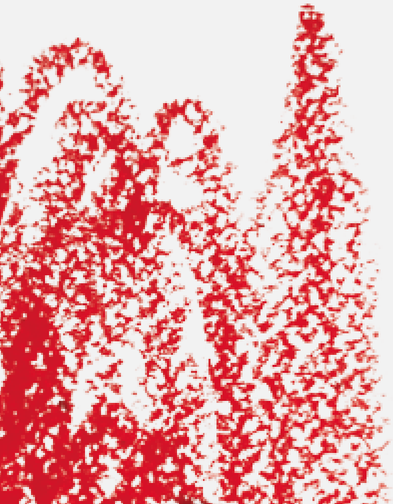
Pro-active international cooperation and new international projects in the region (involving Georgia and Azerbaijan as well) and with the neighboring countries from the European Union (especially such as Poland, Lithuania, Sweden, Romania, Bulgaria, and Italy) can give the organizations new resources, new practices, new ideas, as well as possibilities to share their achievements.

It is obvious that it is necessary to keep strengthening network relations by developing and discussing the joint agenda of organizations — CHOICE participants, as well as to keep involving a wider range of partners. Probably, we should create and develop a general coordinating platform for the organizations from the sector of historical and cultural heritage of the Eastern Partnership region.

CULTURAL HERITAGE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP REGION

CONTEXT AND TASKS

With all diversity of the Eastern Partnership countries, they still have a lot of common features that form a separate region. It has to do not only with their historical links of old time and the recent Soviet past, but also with similar contemporary problems of development. The questions of de-Sovietization, completion of building national institutions of independent states and rapprochement with the space of today’s European norms and regulation standards in a wide spectrum of areas are topical for all EaP countries. In its turn, the Eastern Partnership, being an initiative of the European Union, spurs the solution of these tasks inasmuch as the countries themselves are ready to accept such help and to share the general European values and purposes. For the years of the existence of the EaP initiative, its multilateral dimension has been connecting the six partner countries together within the framework of many joint initiatives and promoting the incipience and strengthening of the understanding of the Eastern Partnership as a conjunct region. Substantially, this process has also been influenced by the geopolitical frictions and challenges caused by Eurasian integration and Russia’s neo-imperial ambitions, which results in coordinated opposition to this external pressure.



The work with cultural heritage in the EaP countries creates wide opportunities in the work with the solution of the questions mentioned above. In the regional dimension, in the cultural heritage sphere, we see several common tasks. First, cultural heritage and the activity connected with it can be a significant source of sustainable social and economic development. Second, cultural heritage is one of significant factors of the national construction and formation of national identity. Third, cultural heritage can become a factor of strengthening the coherence of the region and a factor of work with regional identity.

A considerable potential of the Eastern Partnership’s development is in the development of horizontal connections between the partner countries in the fields of economy, politics, safety, and contacts between people. Culture is able to create a basis for such cooperation as it is the richest source of receiving mutual knowledge of each other. Today, the information vacuum in this knowledge is being filled with Russian sources of information, which leads to the inadequate understanding of societies of the EaP countries. Cultural heritage is the area where mutual information exchanges and cooperation can result in a deeper understanding between our peoples.

GENERAL QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

In the field of work with cultural heritage, the EaP countries face a number of general questions and problems.

The national policy in the cultural heritage field

In all the analyzed EaP countries (Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine), the national policy in the field of cultural heritage borrows many features, forms, and regulation approaches, which are incident to the Soviet period. First of all, it is expressed in the state's domination in the formulation and implementation of the national policy in the field of cultural heritage. Other stakeholders' inclusion is fragmentary, inconsistent, and isoften accompanied by mutual distrust between different subjects. The centralized policy in the field of culture is often burdened with ideological approaches that can create dividing lines and conflicts between various groups of society (the cases of Belarus and Armenia).

As a whole, the legislations in the cultural heritage field of all the countries is generated and evaluated positively. At the same time, at the level of implementing these laws, there is a whole set of various problems. There is a quite good level of technical preparation of laws, but in some cases they remain "dead" documents without any practical application. Law enforcement practice faces the absence of necessary personnel, lack of financial resources (especially at the level of local authorities and cultural establishments), gaps or restrictions in the use of foreign financing and sponsors' support, and the weak level of management at local levels.

> Practically in all the countries, governmental programs have a formalistic approach to the preservation and development of cultural heritage, do not consider any possibilities of cooperation with local communities and non-state organizations, pay not enough attention to the returning of cultural heritage to the actual use, and do not consider its social component.

Additionally, it is possible to mention the absence of any favorable investment climate and support to private initiatives, including tax privileges for sponsors and philanthropists. The state policy is poorly connected with requirements of inhabitants at local levels; heritage is not included in the practice of plans and strategies of local development.

Social perception of cultural heritage

Both in civil society and in approaches of the basic operating actors (the state, experts, civil society organizations, and local communities), the "narrow sight" of cultural heritage is dominating. The latter is perceived as a set of material and non-material values that have to be protected. Heritage is not considered as a potential source of social and economic development; its potential of actual use is underestimated. The socio-cultural component of heritage, the way it is reflected in public consciousness, is practically not paid attention to. The aspect of involving local communities in the work with heritage does not receive proper attention, and therefore — objects of cultural heritage remain excluded from processes of contemporary sustainable utilitarian use. The practice of working with cultural heritage is, in many respects, conservative and poorly involves contemporary innovative approaches in the work with heritage.

Cultural heritage in the EaP countries frequently remains a conflict area; there are constant wrangles of various public groups. In particular, the recent heritage of the Soviet period needs to be reconsidered and reinterpreted. It leads to the necessity of developing mechanisms of public dialogue, mediation, and resolution of conflicts in the field of heritage.

Infrastructure

Besides the widespread problems with the insufficient financing of the work with heritage at the national and especially local levels, in all the countries there are problems with qualified personnel in the cultural heritage sphere. It is necessary to support the development of personnel potential with the help of special programs (for example — Twinning) and formal and informal education.

The question of the lack of financial resources can be solved by creating more acceptable conditions for state-private partnership, private investments, and business in the sphere of the work with heritage. Contributions of civil society organizations and the local population are not less important as they can involve the considerable resources of volunteering, crowdfunding and crowdsourcing.

Civil society and local communities

Civil society in the cultural heritage sector is a subject with huge potential, and the policy formation “from below”, from the local population level, provides its bigger stability. At the same time, there are many problems with the participation of civil society and local communities in decision-making and with the actual level of civil society organizations’ competences in management of projects in the sphere of culture. Even in the presence of possibilities of participation in acceptance of state decisions, possibilities of submitting offers and recommendations from the public (for example, in Moldova), such proposals from civil society may not correspond to the required quality level. Projects like CHOICE, as well as other international programs focused on local communities, have shown that local communities can be extremely inert and opened enough to participate and to be involved. This ambivalence demonstrates once again that questions of the importance of participating in the decision-making process or the pro-active launch of new initiatives are not perceived by the population as priority.

It is also possible to mention the problems of mistrust of public organizations to state bodies, the absence of consistency and coordination of actions in the cultural heritage preservation sphere between public actors; restrictive practices of the state concerning the conditions of developing and participating of civil society in decision-making.

GENERAL APPROACHES TO THE SOLUTION OF PROBLEMS

During the implementation of the CHOICE project, it was possible to work out several common principles that can help to solve some problems mentioned above. We believe that network projects like CHOICE, governmental programs, and EU programs in the field of culture and cultural heritage can win if they are based on:

- innovations and contemporaneity in the implementation of projects and programs in the field of cultural heritage;
- attention to the social component in the work with heritage (including the participation of civil society and local communities in decision-making and the work with heritage);
- localization and maximum approximation of the work with cultural heritage to local strategies of development and requirements of local communities;
- use of the potential of regional cooperation between the EaP countries.

see “About Heritage: the contents of the notion and the meaning of our work with it”

The scheme of four components: “action” — “infrastructure” — “reflection” — “presentation” can become the implementation principles of the project activity in the field of cultural heritage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to change the policy in the field of cultural heritage in the EaP countries, we can present several concrete recommendations for different groups of subjects:

For state bodies of the EaP countries:

- In the national policy and national programs in the cultural heritage sphere, it is necessary to have a wider understanding of cultural heritage, including the advancement and development of the economic potential of cultural heritage, as well as its value as a factor of developing local territories and communities.
- The national policy and law enforcement practice should try to expand civil society's participation in decision-making in the field of cultural heritage at all levels.
- It is necessary to promote and widen the participation of local communities and local population in the work aimed at revitalizing and preserving cultural heritage.
- In order to involve more the potential of private business and investments in the cultural heritage sphere, it is necessary to use more widely mechanisms of state-private partnership, sponsorship; to create preferential terms for business in the heritage sphere.
- The national policy in the field of heritage will become more efficient if to develop and support cross-sector dialogue and cooperation (national authorities — local authorities — NGOs, NGOs — local authorities — private business, etc.).
- It is necessary to include the understanding of culture and cultural resources as a strategically important area for sustainable development and inclusive economic growth in strategic documents of national governments.
- It is possible to stimulate more vigorous activity in the field of heritage by creating national financial mechanisms (foundations, awards, etc.) in the field of cultural heritage.
- It is necessary to expand powers of local authorities, their personnel and financial possibilities in the work with heritage.
- In the countries, there is not enough or even practically no vocational training in the field of heritage; those who receive education adjacent to the heritage sector do not stay in this sector because of low salaries and the absence of prospects of professional growth; therefore, it is necessary to develop components of corresponding education in formal and informal sectors.

For civil society of the EaP countries and the EU:

- It is necessary to enlarge programs aimed at developing the management potential of civil society organizations.
- It is important to raise awareness of civil society at all its levels about problems of preserving material and non-material heritage. Such campaigns are especially needed in the work with local authorities and local communities.
- Advancement of education in the field of cultural heritage and cultural landscapes.
- Distribution of best practices received during the implementation of projects of the CHOICE program, in particular — the experience of involving younger generations.
- To increase the awareness of local communities about the importance of their participation in decision-making processes by means of civil society's projects aimed at revealing features of cultural heritage, which characterize vividly this territory and underline the local community's responsibility for the protection and preservation of this heritage.

In the European Union, the year 2018 is declared a year of cultural heritage, and it is symbolically important to use it to involve more the EaP countries in the cooperation with the EU in this field

For the European Union and EU programs:

- The year of cultural heritage can be the best time to widen the representation of joint European identity and culture in the EaP countries, mutual enrichment and deepening of the understanding of cultural heritage of Europe.
- It is important to reach bigger coherence and coordination of the EU policy in the field of culture and cultural heritage with the EU's topical programs and priorities in the EaP region. In particular — the work with culture can become an important component of the EU information strategy, a means of struggling against propaganda, a factor of strengthening regional identity in the Eastern Partnership, a basis for stronger connections of the EaP countries among themselves and with the European Union.
- It is necessary to support the tools of regional cooperation and exchange of best practices in the field of heritage, to stimulate horizontal cooperation (networking) between the EaP countries at the level of civil society, educational institutions, cultural establishments, local authorities, and national governments.
- It is expedient to support the development of mechanisms of multilateral dialogue and cross-sector cooperation in the EaP countries with the participation of EU representatives, the EU's target programs in the field of culture, European agencies and cultural establishments.
- It is important to dilate the tools of the "Creative Europe" program for the EaP region.
- In the EU's programs for the EaP region, including the programs of trans-border and territorial cooperation, it is necessary to use wider treatment of the notion "cultural heritage". In actual programs, cultural heritage is sometimes linked only to its separate components (e.g. traditional crafts), which limits the potential of its use and the space for project activity in this branch.

ANNEX

International and national legislation regulating policies in the sector of cultural heritage

International documents

- UNESCO: Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)
- ICOMOS: Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage (International Committee for Vernacular Architecture, 1999)
- Council of Europe: European Landscape Convention (2000)
- ICOMOS: Nizhny Tagil Charter for the Industrial Heritage (2003)
- UNESCO: Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)
- Council of Europe: Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society. Faro Convention (2005)
- ICCROM: Riga Charter on Authenticity and Historical Reconstruction in Relationship to Cultural Heritage (2005)
- ICOMOS: Valletta Principles for the Safeguarding and Management of Historic Cities, Towns and Urban Areas (2011)
- Council of the European Union: Conclusions on Cultural Heritage as a Strategic Resource for a Sustainable Europe (2014)
- Council of the European Union: Conclusions on Participatory Governance of Cultural Heritage (2014)
- European Commission: Communication Towards an Integrated Approach to Cultural Heritage for Europe (2014)
- World Heritage Committee: Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2016 edition)
- Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage: Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage (2016 edition)

National documents of the Republic of Armenia

- The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia (1995)
- The Law of the Republic of Armenia “On Protection and Use of Historical and Cultural immovable Monuments and of Historical Environment” (1998)
- The Law of the Republic of Armenia “On State-owned,

Historical and Cultural Immovable Monuments non subject to Alienation" (2003)
- The Law of the Republic of Armenia "On Cultural Legislation Principles" (2009)
- The Criteria for the recognition of cultural spaces in the Republic of Armenia and the
- Government's approval N 241-N, on the Statement of the list of cultural spaces (2012)
- The Government's Decision "On the Regulations of Creation of an Electronic Database on Cultural Values and the Statement of the List of Organizations Issuing Database Information" (2014)

National documents of the Republic of Belarus

- Regulations "On an authentic folklore group in the Republic of Belarus" (1999)
- Regulations of Council of Ministers "On the protection of archaeological sites for earthworks i construction works" (2002)
- Instruction "On the accounting, storage and transportation of weapons and ammunition of cultural value" (2003)
- The Law "On Culture" (2004)
- The Law "On Museums and Museum Fund" (2005)
- Law "On the Protection of the Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Belarus" (2006)
- Regulations of Council of Ministers "On the Belarusian Republican Scientific and Methodological Council for Historical and Cultural Heritage for the Ministry of Culture" (2006)
- Regulations of Council of Ministers "On the procedure for maintaining the State List of Historical and Cultural Values of the Republic of Belarus" (2006)
- Regulations of Council of Ministers "On the procedure for the formation of the Bank of information on the historical and cultural heritage of the Republic of Belarus and the procedure for acquaintance with the information contained therein" (2006)
- Resolution of the Council of Ministers "On the Museum Fund of the Republic of Belarus" (2006)
- Decree of the Council of Ministers "On the procedure for visitors to museums with museum items" (2006)
- Presidential decree "On some issues of transfer of museum items and (or) museum collections across the border" (2006)
- Instructions "On the procedure for the acquisition of museum funds" (2007)
- Instruction "On the composition, procedure for the development and approval of projects for protection zones for immovable material historical and cultural values" (2007)
- Instruction "On the procedure for certain actions with regard to historical and cultural values" (2007)
- Presidential Decree "On the procedure for valuation of cultural property" (2007)
- Instruction "On the accounting and inventory of the values of the cultural and historical fund" (2008)
- Resolution of the Council of Ministers "On the Republican Public Council for the Affairs of Culture and Art under the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus" (2010)
- Instruction "On the procedure for filling the passport of historical and cultural value" (2013)
- The Code of the Republic of Belarus on Culture (2016)

National documents of the Republic of Moldova

- Law of the Republic of Moldova "On the Protection of Monuments" (1993)
- Law of the Republic of Moldova "On Culture" (1999)
- Law of the Republic of Moldova "On Museums" (2002), developed with draft Law "On Museums" (2017)
- Law of the Republic of Moldova "On Folk Crafts" (2003)
- Regulation "On Registration and Preservation of Mobile Cultural Heritage" (2003)
- Law of the Republic of Moldova "On Cinema" (2004)
- Law of the Republic of Moldova "On the Protection of Archaeological Heritage" (2010)
- Law of the Republic of Moldova "On Public Monuments" (2011)
- Law of the Republic of Moldova "On The Protection of The National Mobile Cultural Heritage" (2011)
- Law of the Republic of Moldova "On The Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage" (2012)
- Culture Development Strategy "Culture 2020" (2014)
- Draft Law of the Republic of Moldova "On Graves and War Commemorations" (2016)

National documents of Ukraine

- Law of Ukraine “On Architectural Activities” (1999)
- Law of Ukraine “On the Protection of the Cultural Heritage” (2000)
- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1760 “On Approval of the Procedure for Determining the Categories of Sights for the Inclusion of Cultural Heritage Objects to the State Register of Real Estates of Ukraine” (2001)
- Law of Ukraine “On Planning and Development of Territories” (2000)
- Law of Ukraine “On the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage” (2004)
- Law of Ukraine “On Export, Import and Restitution of Cultural Property” (1999)
- Law of Ukraine “On the List of Cultural Heritage Sites Illegible for Privatization” (2008)
- Law of Ukraine “On Culture” (2010)

Can civil society influence policy making in the field of historical and cultural heritage, in particular, where mechanisms for it are not yet created?

The CHOICE project was designed to find those who were willing to try. As a result, teams of more than 30 civil society initiatives, as well as heritage professionals from Armenia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, joined together to embody not only dozens of beautiful and necessary ideas in their communities, but also lay the foundation for future systemic changes.

This book shows a row of tested ways how civil society organizations can solve critical situations, expand their influence and form new niches in the cultural heritage sector. Enjoy!

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